

# NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA



## THESIS

**SURVEY OF BLACK OFFICERS IN THE  
MARINE CORPS: ATTITUDES AND OPINIONS  
ON RECRUITING, RETENTION, AND  
DIVERSITY**

by

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December 1995

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AND OPINIONS ON RECRUITING, RETENTION, AND DIVERSITY**

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Submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of

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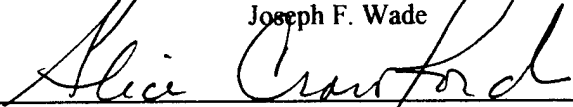
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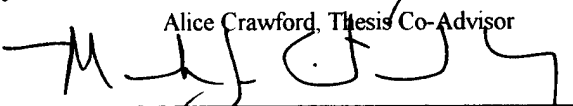
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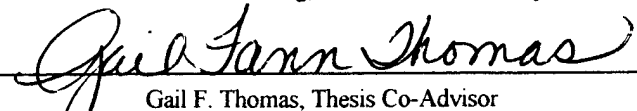
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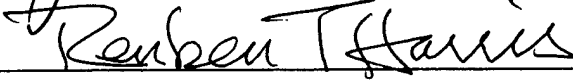
  
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## **ABSTRACT**

This thesis addresses the reasons why Black officers joined the Marine Corps, their attitudes toward continued service, and their general feelings about population diversity in the military. Focused interviews were conducted with 15 Black Marine officers. All interviews were taped and then transcribed. Analysis of the transcripts revealed 15 general themes. These themes covered many topics, including the people who most influenced an officer's decision to join the Marine Corps, the role of recruiters, perceptions of inequitable treatment, and concerns about achieving minority representation in the officer ranks. A major finding drawn from the themes is that the Marine Corps must continue to strive for a deeper understanding of the problems and issues confronting minority officers. In the end, the key to success in minority officer recruitment lies in the thoughts and perspectives of current, as well as, future minority officers. The thesis concludes with a collection of potential survey items drawn from the themes and recommended courses of action that may help the sea Services pursue their goal of population diversity.



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## **I. INTRODUCTION**

### **A. BACKGROUND**

There are many equal opportunity concerns facing the United States Marine Corps (USMC) today. These concerns include, among others, creating and maintaining an organizational climate where all minorities believe they can succeed based upon their ability (regardless of color or gender), attracting a representative number of quality young men and women of multi-cultural backgrounds to be Marine officers, and retaining a representative number (through competitive augmentation and promotion processes) to progress into the senior officer ranks. [Ref. 6:p. 1] The equal opportunity challenges facing the USMC include positioning the Marine Corps as an appealing career option in the multi-cultural community, attracting the best and the brightest of a diverse population to its competitive environment, and improving the career opportunities for minority officers. [Ref. 6:p.1] This thesis focuses on the choice of Black officers to affiliate with the USMC.

The Department of Defense (DoD) has recently taken steps to achieve racial harmony that is necessary to maintain morale and fighting effectiveness. For example, in 1995 Defense Secretary William J. Perry reestablished the position of Deputy Assistant Secretary for Affirmative Action, which had ceased to exist since 1986. The "Campaign Plan to Increase Diversity within the Officer Corps of the Marine Corps" has recently been signed by the Commandant of the Marine Corps. [Ref. 6:p.4] Furthermore, in the past year, the Secretary of Defense ordered all senior military and civilian officials in the Defense Department to attend two-day equal opportunity training seminars.



The Secretary of the Navy has announced a plan to increase minority officer accessions, to include 12 percent Black, 12 percent Hispanic, and 5 percent Asian/Pacific Islander and Native American/Alaskan Native by the year 2000. Today, minorities account for just about 11 percent of Marine officers including 6 percent Black, 3 percent Hispanic, and 2 percent Other. [Ref. 9:p. 22] These data alone suggest that meeting the Secretary of the Navy's goals will not be an easy task. Only modest gains in the representation of minority officers have been achieved in the past, despite programs to increase their numbers. [Ref. 4:p.2]

In 1976-77, the Marine Corps published its Equal Opportunity (EO) and Affirmative Action (AA) Plan that included sets of objectives and milestones in categories established by DoD and internal sources. The Marine Corps has failed to achieve its goals. After further inquiry, it is easy to see that this failure can be attributed to the lack of integration and institutionalization of the EO/AA policies and objectives. [Ref. 4:encl. 2] This failure to achieve EO and AA goals is evident in all career fields, including critical fields such as acquisition. The main contributing factor to the problem is the position that the section or department that originating the EO or AA program is solely responsible for its implementation. Additionally, the military's approach, as a whole, has been geared less toward changing the attitudes or beliefs of people than toward the more pragmatic objective of modifying behavior. [Ref. 5] There has also been a view among some leaders that the minority issue is of relatively low priority. This became clear when the position of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Affirmative Action was eliminated in the mid-

1980s. When the office disappeared, a concurrent erosion of interest in equal opportunity soon followed. [Ref. 5]

A group of newly promoted flag rank officers was asked in 1995 to assess the "overall equal opportunity climate" in the Armed Forces, and they rated it better than good. However, it is clear that a number of people would disagree with this assessment. What military personnel think the Services have accomplished in equal opportunity apparently depends on the servicemember's rank, gender, and skin color. [Ref. 5] The interaction between Headquarters Marine Corps (HQMC) agencies required to successfully complete the EO/AA program requires that all personnel become aware of, and responsive to, the issues of minority Marines. The awareness requirement has not been realized; therefore, responsiveness to minority issues has not occurred. The development of a survey would help to provide the required information about what attracts minorities to the Marine Corps and, equally important, what makes them stay.

## **B. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

This thesis addresses minority representation in the officer ranks of United States Marine Corps. The primary focus is the choice of Black officers to affiliate with the United States Marine Corps. Currently, DoD is interested in increasing the level of recruitment and retention of minority officers. This thesis, part of an effort to develop a survey for the Department of the Navy, involves in-depth analysis of why minority officers choose the Marine Corps over other Services or competing opportunities in the civilian job market. In addition, research focuses on the attitudes and experiences of minorities with respect to accepting critical billets outside their regular occupational specialties in the Marine Corps.

### **C. SCOPE/METHODOLOGY**

This thesis seeks to identify the underlying reasons why minorities, particularly Blacks, choose to serve in the Marine Corps, select critical career paths such as acquisition, and why they stay. The thesis uses data previously obtained by Lt. James E. Jones and Lt. Willie J. Stigler from one-on-one interviews with Black Naval Officers and information from similar interviews with Black Marine officers. The effect of various policies on minorities and the perceptions of these minorities concerning recruitment and retention in the Marine Corps were recorded and analyzed to capture the feeling of the group. These data were analyzed using content analysis and descriptive statistics. Finally, the data were used to construct potential items for a survey that will later be administered to minority officers in follow-on research.

### **D. BENEFIT OF THE STUDY**

The minority population of the United States is increasing. The Census Bureau estimates that, by the year 2020, the minority share of the general population will grow by approximately 10.9 percentage points overall. Similarly, the minority pool of baccalaureate holders will also increase. For years, Marine officials and personnel planners have recognized that socioeconomic changes and demographic trends will ultimately lead to increased participation of minorities in the enlisted ranks. However, attempts to increase the number of minority officers have met with limited success. If the Marine Corps' goal is to ensure that the minority officer percentages keep pace with the anticipated population growth, further research is clearly needed to support that goal. This thesis should provide valuable insight and information to assist the Department of the Navy and DoD in attaining

their goals in minority officer recruitment and retention. Additionally, it is hoped that this research will help personnel officials better understand the occupational choices of minorities, particularly with respect to acquisition billets in the USMC.

#### **E. ORGANIZATION OF THE THESIS**

This thesis attempts to build a foundation for future research of Black officers in the Navy and Marine Corps and their attitudes, experiences, and opinions about diversity, retention, and recruitment. Chapter II presents background information ranging from Black officer representation to a brief history of Blacks in the Marine Corps. Chapter III discusses the research methodology, data analysis, and theme development of this thesis. In Chapter IV, data analysis and themes are presented along with supporting excerpts from interviews. Chapter V presents a collection of potential survey items. Chapter VI discusses major conclusions drawn from the findings, and recommendations based on the study.



## **II. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **A. BLACK OFFICER REPRESENTATION IN THE UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS**

The Armed Services of the 1990s have exceeded all major segments of the civilian sector in terms of fostering advancement opportunities and racial equality for its minority members. [Ref. 8:p.1] Though much has been done, still more must be accomplished in terms of officer recruitment and retention. The recruitment and retention of Black officers in the sea Services has been a relatively difficult task. Minority recruitment has been especially difficult for the Marine Corps, where Blacks and Hispanics account for a combined total of 9 percent of the officer corps. [Ref. 9:p.2] In 1962, a Marine Captain, soon to be the first Black Marine officer to lead an infantry company into combat, wrote the Commandant of the Marine Corps to advise him of a dilemma that faced the Marine Corps. The Captain wrote: "During the short career of the undersigned, the small number of Negro Marine officers has been noted with concern." [Ref. 4:encl 1] The same concern exists today.

The figures in Tables 1 and 2 indicate that Blacks are underrepresented in the Marine Corps officer ranks. Additionally, fiscal 1994 data indicate Black Marines make up a total of 18 percent of the enlisted ranks. [Ref. 9:p.22] This is coupled with the fact that Blacks and Hispanics are among the fastest growing segments of the U.S. population and that, by the year 2000, they will comprise the second largest pool for military recruitment. [Ref. 8:p.3] Clearly, the importance of minority officer representation continues to grow.

**Table 1**

**Number and Percentage Distribution of Marine Officers by Racial/Ethnic Group,  
Fiscal 1980 and 1994**

<u>Racial/Ethnic Group</u>	<b>1980</b>		<b>1994</b>	
	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
White	17,141	94.2	15,810	89.0
Black	710	3.9	992	6.0
Hispanic	187	1.0	592	3.0
<u>Other</u>	<u>160</u>	<u>.9</u>	<u>429</u>	<u>2.0</u>
Total	18,198	100.0	17,823	100.0

Source: Statistics for Fiscal 1980 are from the Marine Corps Gazette, March 1984. Figures for Fiscal 1994 are from the Marines 1995 Almanac, January 1995.

**Table 2**

**Number/Percent Distribution of Marine Officers by Rank, Racial/Ethnic Group,  
and Gender, September 1994**

<b>Rank</b>	<b>White</b>		<b>Black</b>		<b>Hispanic</b>		<b>Other</b>	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
Gen	67/97	1/1.5	1/1.5	0/0.0	0/0.0	0/0.0	0/0.0	0/0.0
Col	584/94	8/1.3	17/2.8	0/0.0	7/1.4	0/0.0	3/0.5	0/0.0
LtCol	1,444/91	41/2.6	59/3.7	3/0.2	22/1.4	1/0.1	17/1.0	0/0.0
Maj	2,708/89	94/3.1	114/3.7	7/0.3	62/2.1	0/0.0	47/1.8	0/0.0
Capt	4,722/87	132/2.3	248/4.4	11/0.3	177/3.3	4/0.1	145/2.5	6/0.1
1stLt	2,748/85	87/2.7	151/4.7	8/0.3	118/3.6	6/0.3	108/3.3	2/0.1
2Lt	1,599/79	99/4.9	150/7.4	9/0.4	95/4.6	6/0.3	66/3.2	5/0.2
<u>WO/CWO</u>	<u>1,401/77</u>	<u>78/4.3</u>	<u>196/10.8</u>	<u>18/1.0</u>	<u>80/4.5</u>	<u>14/0.8</u>	<u>27/1.5</u>	<u>3/0.1</u>
TOTAL	15,270/86	540/2.9	936/5.3	56/0.3	561/3.1	31/0.2	413/2.2	16/0.1

Source: Marines 1995 Almanac, January 1995.

**B. HISTORY OF BLACKS IN THE U.S. MARINE CORPS**

Race relations have been among the most emotional, complex, and enduring issues facing the United States. [Ref. 1:p.vii] The Navy allowed Blacks to enlist in all service

ratings at the start of World War I. By 1918, Blacks accounted for only one percent of naval forces, with most serving as stewards, messmen, and coal passers in firerooms. In 1942, the Marine Corps allowed Blacks to enlist for the first time in nearly 150 years. By the end of the Korean war, the Marine Corps completely eliminated its racially segregated units. [Ref. 1:p.30] However, while thousands of Black enlisted men served in Korea, only a handful of Black officers did. [Ref. 12:p.62] In the late 1960s, the Marine Corps actively took steps to alleviate the racial tensions in the ranks, which reflected problems nationwide. Central to all proposed and enacted programs was an intensive effort to increase the number of Black officers. [Ref.12:p.74] In 1967, Blacks accounted for 155 of the approximately 23,000 officers in the Marine Corps. [Ref. 12:p.74] Today, there are a total of 992 Black officers serving on active duty in the Marine Corps out of a total officer strength of 17,831. [Ref. 9:p.22] Thus Blacks currently account for less than 6 percent of all Marine officers. This compares with Black representation of 18 percent in the enlisted force.

To fully understand the Black officer representation issue, one must go as far back in U.S. history as the American Revolution and examine Black participation in the Marine Corps and regulations imposed by the military establishment. During the American Revolution, Blacks served in small numbers in both the Continental and state navies and armies. According to surviving muster and pay rolls, there were at least three Blacks in the ranks of the Continental Marines and ten others who served as Marines on ships of the Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Pennsylvania navies. [Ref. 12:p.ix ]

Within a year of the signing of the Treaty of Paris, the Continental Marines went out of existence; however, Congress did authorize Marine guards as part of the new Navy's



planned ships' complement. [Ref. 12:p.ix] On 16 March 1798, the Secretary of War prescribed a set of rules governing the enrollment of Marines for the new ship Constellation, including the provision that "No Negro, Mulatto or Indian be enlisted...." Additionally, the regulations prohibiting the enlistment of Blacks were continued when Congress reestablished a separate Marine Corps and the new Commandant directed that Blacks and Mulattoes were not to be enlisted. [Ref. 12:p. ix] In short, those few Black men who served as Marines during the Revolutionary War were pioneers who were not followed by others of their race until June 1942.

### **1. The First Black Marines**

Executive Order No. 8802 opened the door for Blacks to serve in all branches of the Armed Forces on 25 June 1941 by establishing the Fair Employment Practices Commission [Ref. 12:p.1]:

In affirming the policy of full participation in the defense program by all persons regardless of color, race, creed, or national origin, and directing certain action in furtherance of said policy... all departments of the government, including the Armed Forces, shall lead the way in erasing discrimination over color or race.

On 1 June 1942, the recruiting of Black Marines began; and on 18 August 1942, Headquarters and Service Battery of the 51st Composite Defense Battalion was activated at Montford Point, North Carolina. [Ref. 12:p.3] In September of that same year Black Marines began their first recruit training since the Revolutionary War.

The calibre of the first Black recruits entering Montford Point was extraordinary. The recruiters had been selective. Some recruits had Army service experience: Recruit Johnson served six years in the Black 25th Infantry and was also a Navy mess

attendant/officers steward; Recruit Pridgen served as a member of the 10th Cavalry in the 1930's; and Recruit Jackson had been an Army lieutenant. [Ref. 12:p.6] A number of new recruits were college graduates, including Recruit Anderson who was an alumnus of Morehouse College, and Recruit Simmons, who graduated from Alcorn A and M and held a master's degree from the University of Illinois. [Ref. 12:p.7] The recruiters had tried hard to find and send to Montford Point Black men with technical, educational, and work backgrounds. The minimum qualifications required for the first Black enlistees were so high that the Commandant was informed that it was doubtful if even white recruits could be procured with such qualifications. [Ref. 21: p.8]

The first 198 Black Marines graduated from bootcamp in November 1942. With the graduation came the formation of the 51st Composite Defense Battalion, consisting of a Reinforced Rifle Company, a 155mm gun battery, and a 90mm anti-aircraft group. A 75mm howitzer battery was organized in December and six PFCs (Private First Class) served as drill instructors while six others served as battery clerks. [Ref. 12:p.8]

On 5 December 1942, voluntary enlistments in the Armed Forces were discontinued for all men 18 to 37 years of age. Beginning in January 1943, all men in the 18 to 37 age group were inducted into the Services through the Selective Service System. To make the draft equitable for both Whites and Blacks, at least 10 percent of those selected were supposed to be Black. [Ref. 12:p.10]

The introduction of the Selective Service quota was confirmed in a memorandum on 8 March 1943 from Headquarters Marine Corps to the Chief of Naval Personnel. [Ref.

12:p.10] The quota of 10 percent Black Marines was to represent a proportion approximating the number of Blacks in the U.S. population.

In early 1943, the Marine Corps was authorized to have 99,000 men. On the basis of the new quota, this meant that the Marine Corps would have to acquire and accommodate 9,900 Blacks. Additionally, any authorized strength increase would lead to a corresponding increase in the monthly draft calls for Black Marines. [Ref. 12:p.10]

Montford Point and the 51st Composite Defense Battalion could not absorb such large numbers. To help reduce the excessive number of Blacks being assigned to the 51st Composite Defense Battalion, on 1 January 1943 the Secretary of the Navy authorized the formation of the Stewards' Branch in the Marine Corps to be composed entirely of Black Marines. Others of the incoming thousands would serve in a second defense battalion contemplated as a follow-on to the 51st. However, the majority of the World War II Black Marines ended up serving in pioneer or labor units for logistics support troops in the Pacific. [Ref. 12:p.10]

By the end of April 1943, Black sergeants and corporals took over as the Senior Drill Instructors of all the Platoons then training at Montford Point. In late May, the last White drill instructor was transferred, and Sergeant "Hashmark" Johnson took his place as the recruit battalion's field sergeant major, in charge of all drill instructors. [Ref. 12:p.11] From then on, all recruit training at Montford Point was conducted by Black NCOs.

At this point, all seemed to be going well for Blacks in the Marine Corps who had apparently established themselves as bonafide Marines. Then, Major General Henry L. Larsen, Commanding General of Camp Lejeune, was invited to Montford Point to attend a

"Boxing Smoker." General Larsen took the opportunity to make a short speech to the assembled Black Marines. There are many versions of his exact words, but he essentially said that he had not realized how serious the war situation was until he had seen "you people wearing our uniform." [Ref. 12:p.13] The Generals' choice of words emphasized to the men that they were still on trial in the eyes of many White Marines.

## **2. The First Black Combat Units**

One of the ironies of the service of Black Marines in World War II was that the units that had been designated, trained, and publicized as combat organizations--the 51 st and 52nd Defense Battalions--never saw combat. [Ref. 12:p.29] Instead, the Marine depot and ammunition companies, and officers' stewards were generally the ones who garnered the battle credits and took the casualties suffered by Black Marines during the war. [Ref. 12:p.29]

Throughout the first six months that Blacks served in the Marine Corps, the focus of attention was on the 51st Composite Defense Battalion. It was to be the first Black combat unit. Lieutenant Colonel Stephenson was one of the first Officers to recommend that the 51st become a regular, heavy defense battalion, stating that "there is nothing that suitable colored personnel cannot be taught." [Ref. 12:p.15] The recommendation was approved at Headquarters Marine Corps on 28 May 1943 with the stipulation that men under training for infantry and field artillery would continue to train with the 51st, pending organization of a separate infantry Battalion. [Ref. 12:p.16] On 7 June 1943, "Composite" was dropped from the title of the 51st Defense Battalion.

The first Black combat unit departed from Camp Lejeune, North Carolina in early January 1944 for combat duty overseas. On 25 February 1944, the 51st arrived at the Ellice Islands to replace the 7th Defense Battalion. [Ref. 12:p.20] After an uneventful stay, the 51st packed up and moved on to the Eniwetok Atoll to replace the 10th Anti-aircraft Battalion.

Action for the Battalion at Eniwetok was not substantive. It was here that members of the Battalion sharpened their talents as gunners through training. The men were hungry for combat and were disappointed that they did not actually get into action. [Ref. 12:p.20]

On 21 November 1945, the 51st was replaced by the all-Black 52nd Defense Battalion. Upon arrival in the United States at Camp Pendleton, the men of the 51st who lived west of the Mississippi and had enough points were discharged from the Marine Corps. [Ref. 12:p.22] The remainder of the 51st arrived at Camp Lejeune on Christmas Day 1945. The processing of the men for discharge began immediately. As the men went their separate ways, they took with them the knowledge that they had served in a unique and pioneering unit. A Black correspondent wrote: "They are a grand bunch! And because of their ability to come through the kind of experience they have had, with its attendant racial irritants, they undoubtedly will be better men and better citizens." [Ref. 12:p.22]

The 52nd, the second Black Defense Battalion in the Marine Corps, was in far better shape than the 51st had been with regard to combat training and experience. [Ref. 12:p.23] One out of three men in the 52nd was a Marine with at least some military experience. The senior NCOs had some time under their belts, and were not trying to command men with

whom they had gone through bootcamp . [Ref. 12:p.23] Additionally, a larger number of men in the 52nd received technical school training in their respective specialities. [Ref. 12:p.23]

On 19 August 1944, the 52nd deployed to the Marshall Islands for combat. [Ref. 12:p.25] Just as with the 51st, the time spent in the Marshalls was uneventful. On 24 March 1945, the 52nd landed on Guam. Here, the men of the 52nd spent their time training, and working as guards and working on general duty details.

Soon it became apparent to the men of the 52nd that instead of being a Defense Unit, they turned out to be nothing more than a working battalion. On 9 July 1945, the battalion's orders to move forward to Okinawa were canceled; then, on the 12th, the battalion began furnishing Island Command with working parties. [Ref. 12:p.27] The working parties eventually became so large that nearly half the battalion was working each day, mostly as stevedores. [Ref. 12:p.27] Just as with the men of the Black depot companies on Guam, the 52nd were heavily committed to this type of physically demanding work.

As the conclusion of the war drew near, the 52nd saw the end of their deployment as an anti-aircraft battalion. After August 1945, when Battery C of the 52nd stood down, no other unit was tactically emplaced. [Ref. 12:p.27] Concurrent with the move of the battalion to a new camp area formerly occupied by an Army engineer battalion, the 52nd began to furnish the 2nd Military Police Battalion and Island Command with large daily details of men for guard duty. On 30 September, operational control of the defense battalion was passed to the 5th Service Depot, and the 52nd turned in all of their combat equipment. [Ref. 12:p.27]

### **3. Depot and Ammunition Companies**

During the early part of World War II, the need for an improved supply system became apparent to the Marine Corps. The need was felt not only at the rear and forward area support bases but in combat itself in the crucial area of shore party operations, the ship-to-shore movement of essential equipment and supplies. [Ref. 12:p.29] Once the supplies were ashore, they had to be sorted and moved forward into the hands of the Marines battling the Japanese. Here, labor troops or stevedores played a critical role.

When the prospective number of Black Marines was greatly increased to 9,900 in 1943, due to the enactment of Selective Service, the issue of their employment arose. In response to this dilemma, the Marine Corps created company-sized units of Black Marines that could be deployed as soon as their ranks were filled with graduates from boot camp. The new Marines would serve as stevedores. [Ref. 12:p.29]

On 8 March 1943, the 1st Marine Depot Company was activated at Montford Point. After ten depot companies had been formed and deployed, a new type of Black unit came into being, the Marine ammunition company. The 1st Marine Ammunition Company was organized at Montford Point on 1 October 1943. [Ref. 12:p.29] From October 1943 until September 1944, one ammunition company and two depot companies were organized every month at Montford point. The last of 12 ammunition companies was activated on September 1, 1944, and depot companies continued to be formed until 1 October 1945 after the war was over.

The first of the depot and ammunition companies to see combat in the Marianas did so on D-day, 15 June 1944. Elements of most of the Black Marine units at Saipan got ashore

on D-day also. [Ref. 12:p.33] These men, never once trained for combat, were used to help repulse an enemy counter-attack during the night and to mop up the armed enemy units that penetrated the lines. [Ref. 12:p.33] When the lines were stabilized, these units were pulled out to take over their normal duties of handling supplies and ammunition.

The first Black Marine to die in combat as a result of enemy action in World War II was Private Kenneth J. Tibbs. The rest of the Black Marines in the combat zone took steps to improve their defenses. By the second day of combat, the Black Marine units had all types of arms that they had never been issued. [Ref. 12:p.34]

The action of the Black Marines under heavy fire and in a situation of extreme danger on Siapan did not go unnoticed by Headquarters Marine Corps. The Commandant, General Vandergrift, was quoted as saying: "The Negro Marines are no longer on trial. They are Marines, period." [Ref. 12:p.35]

The actions of the Black Marine units on Peleliu and Iwo Jima proved again that they bore their share of the load in combat, though not trained to do so. The Commanding General of the 1st Marine Division wrote:

The Negro race can well be proud of the work performed by the 7th Ammunition Company [11th Depot Company] as they have demonstrated in every respect that they appreciate the privilege of wearing a Marine uniform and serving with Marines in combat. Please convey to your command these sentiments and inform them that in the envy of the entire Division they have earned a "Well Done." [Ref. 12:p.37]

The Commander, Corps Shore Party, wrote:

[I am] highly gratified with the performance of these colored troops, whose normal function is that of labor troops, while in direct contact with the enemy for the first time. Proper security prevented their being taken



unaware, and they conducted themselves with marked coolness and courage.  
[Ref. 12:p.39]

The largest number of Black Marines to serve in combat took part in the seizure of Okinawa. All told, three ammunition companies and four depot companies arrived at Okinawa on D-day, 1 April 1945. [Ref. 12:p.39] Later in the month, three additional depot companies arrived to serve.

Despite the unglamorous nature of the work they performed, the ammunition and depot companies of World War II helped set a high standard of discipline and combat effectiveness. [Ref. 12:p.46] Though never really trained for combat, these units set the standard and forged the reputation of Black Marines.

#### **4. The First Black Officers**

In the summer of 1944, the first Black Marines were assigned to the Navy's V-12 program. This program provided for a college education, at selected colleges and universities, and ultimately a commission in the Navy or Marine Corps Reserve for qualified enlisted men. [Ref. 12:p.47]

Though Headquarters Marine Corps had conducted a study concluding that no Black Marine officers should be procured at the time, three Black college graduates were ordered by higher authority to be sent to Platoon Commanders Class. [Ref. 12:p.47] All three men failed to make it through the course despite the fact that they were among the best-educated and militarily successful of all Black Marines. Later in civilian life, they became a lawyer, a physician, and a college professor and author. [Ref. 12:p.48] Three other similarly qualified Black candidates soon followed and they, too, failed to make the grade. On 10

November 1945, the first Black Marine officer, Frederic C. Branch, was commissioned a Reserve Second Lieutenant. [Ref. 12:p.48]

## **5. The Marine Corps and Integration**

After the war, the Marine Corps exerted great effort to find posts to which it could assign Blacks in segregated units. The post-war drawdown in the strength of the Marine Corps actually advanced the cause of integration, because it became increasingly apparent that the maintenance of separate training facilities was uneconomical. [Ref. 12:p.53] The drawdown, combined with the difficulty of finding acceptable duty stations for the Black units, ultimately led to the end of segregation. [Ref. 12:p.53]

President Harry S. Truman issued Executive Order 9981 on 26 July 1948. This Executive Order called for the equality of treatment and opportunity for all persons in the Armed Services without regard to race, color, religion, or national origin. [Ref. 10:p.13] The order did not explicitly require desegregation, but it did establish the President's Committee on Equality of Treatment and Opportunity in the Armed Services and facilitate discussions concerning alternatives to segregation. [Ref. 10:p.13]

Secretary of Defense Louis Johnson interpreted Executive Order 9981 as requiring desegregation and, on 20 April 1949, ordered the Armed Services to end racial discrimination. [Ref. 12:p.55] The Secretary's directive provided that all individuals, regardless of race, be accorded equal opportunity for appointment, advancement, professional improvement, and promotion.

On 18 November 1949, the Marine Corps issued a memorandum of guidance to commanders establishing a policy regarding Black Marines. This policy revoked all

previous policy statements, including those prohibiting mixed units, by stating: "Individual Negro Marines will be assigned in accordance with Military Occupational Specialty to vacancies in any unit where their services can be effectively utilized." [Ref. 12:p.55]

During the Korean War, Lieutenant William K. Jenkins became the first Black officer to lead Marines in combat as both a weapons and a rifle platoon commander. [Ref. 12:p.56] Another segregation barrier was broken on 8 September 1949 when the first Black woman, Annie E. Graham, enlisted in the Marine Corps. In 1950, Annie L. Grimes, who was destined to become the first Black Female warrant officer, joined the Marine Corps and entered and went to boot camp. [Ref. 12:p.57]

On 9 September 1949, Headquarters Company, Montford Point Camp was deactivated. The deactivation marked the end of an era for Black Marines, and it came just a little over seven years after the first Black recruits had reported for training. [Ref. 12:p.57] There were still all-Black units in the Marine Corps, but there were integrated units as well, and the trend toward a completely integrated Marine Corps was irreversible.

On 30 June 1950, 1,502 Black Marines were serving on active duty; of these , 1,075 had general duty assignments and 427 were serving as stewards. By the end of the war, there were 14,731 (5.91 percent) Black Marines on active duty, of which only 538 served as stewards. [Ref. 12:p.59] This growth in the number of Black Marines unmistakably reflected the end of segregation.

With the end of segregation, Black Marines merged into the mainstream of Marine Corps experience. Throughout much of the Korean War and the decades that followed, the

trace of Black Marines is extremely difficult to trace. There was an intentional effort, by the Marine Corps, to cut down on the number and variety of reports that included race as a reporting element so that Blacks could be melded into the mainstream of Marine Corps experience. In June 1953, there were 30 types of records that required race as a reporting element. [Ref. 12:p.59] By April 1954, the number of such records was reduced to 10. [Ref. 12:p.61]

## **6. The Korean War**

During the Korean War, all Black Marines were assigned to billets according to their training and experience, and each Marine theoretically earned the respect of fellow Marines according to job performance. Additionally, the Korean War saw many firsts for Black Marine Officers: Lieutenant William K. Jenkins became the first Black officer to lead Marines in combat; Second Lieutenant Frank E. Petersen, Jr. became the first Black Marine officer to be commissioned in the Naval Aviation Cadet Program and to fly combat missions; and Second Lieutenant Kenneth H. Berthoud, Jr. became one of the first Black Marine tank officers to serve on occupation duty in Korea. [Ref. 12:p.63]

These few men, and the others who slowly followed them in the Marine Corps to serve as pilots and ground officers in the 1950s, had to have a special quality of personal integrity and professional pride. They represented Black Marines as a group, and whatever they did was to many men the measure of what could be expected from Black Marines in leadership positions. These Black officers were aware of their role and their responsibility, and knew that there were few situations where they could afford to relax and none where they could just be average officers. [Ref. 12:p.63]

## **7. Vietnam**

Over 448,000 Marines served in Vietnam between 1965 and 1973; of these, approximately 41,000 (about 9 percent) were Black Marines. [Ref. 12:p.78] From the first commitment of troops until the last, Black Marines were always present in Vietnam. The efforts of Black Marines in the war are difficult to separate from those of all Marines, which attests to progress toward integration throughout the period. [Ref. 12:p.78]

During the Vietnam war, squads, platoons, and companies were led in battle by Black Marine officers and non-commissioned officers. Additionally, responsible staff and support positions were held by Blacks throughout the Marine force in Vietnam. [Ref. 12:p.78]

One significant accomplishment was that of Lieutenant Colonel Frank E. Peterson. In May 1968, Lieutenant Colonel Peterson became the first Black to command a tactical air squadron in the Navy or Marine Corps. [Ref. 12:p.78] While he commanded VMFA-314, it received the 1968 Hanson Award as the best fighter squadron in the Marine Corps.

The number of decorations earned by Black Marines in the Vietnam War included Navy Crosses, Silver Stars, Distinguished Flying Crosses, Bronze Stars, and a host of other medals for heroic action and meritorious service. Five Black Marines were awarded the Medal of Honor for valor during the Vietnam war: PFC James Anderson, Sergeant Rodney M. Davis, PFC Ralph H. Johnson, PFC Oscar P. Austin, and PFC Robert H. Jenkins. [Ref. 12:p.81]

## 8. Race for the Moon

In 1980, a Black Marine by the name of Charles F. Bolden, Jr. was selected by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration to enter astronaut training. By 1981, he became an astronaut and qualified as a pilot on space shuttle crews. Since then, he has flown four space shuttle missions. On his third mission, in 1992, he commanded the Space Shuttle Atlantis. On his fourth and final mission, in 1994, he commanded the six-member crew on the Space Shuttle Discovery. [Ref. 2:p.1]

On 1 September 1995, Charles F. Bolden Jr. was promoted to Brigadier General. He is currently one of two Black generals on active duty in the Marine Corps.

### C. THE CLIMATE

The Marine Corps Equal Opportunity Survey (MCEOS) was designed to assess the Equal Opportunity (EO) climate of the Marine Corps as a whole. The survey is the first of its kind for the Marine Corps and allows for a Total Force assessment of the EO climate. The MCEOS was mailed in May 1994 to approximately 10,000 active duty Marines (both officer and enlisted personnel). Approximately 48 percent of the sample responded. The following is a summary of the race-related results [Ref. 19]:

Race effects: Whites are more positive than Blacks. The racial gap is larger between officers than between enlisted groups.

<u>EO Career Experience:</u>	<u>Percent of Officers Responding Yes</u>
Command has EO Representative	72
Understand USMC EO Program	87
Received EO training in past year	68
I made a discrimination or sexual harassment complaint during the past year	2
I have been falsely accused of discrimination during the past year	3

Racial Discrimination Behaviors: officers responding "yes" that they have been the target of eight types of discrimination behaviors during the past year while on duty, or on base/ship while off duty.

	<u>Percent of Officers Responding Yes</u>	
	<u>White</u>	<u>Black</u>
Negative comments	5	29
Offensive jokes	4	25
Ignored by others	2	23
Given menial jobs	1	12
Not asked to socialize	3	12
Denied potential reward/benefit	2	9
Physically threatened	1	1
Physically assaulted	0	0

Percentage of officers who experienced racial/ethnic discrimination during the past twelve months: White- 4      Black- 29

Percentage of victims who made a complaint after experiencing racial discrimination: White- 0      Black- 18

General Findings:

Blacks, both officers and enlisted, reported higher levels of discrimination than Whites. The rates are similar to that reported in Navy surveys.

Based on the MCEOS, the EO climate of USMC Officers was very positive in 1994, especially for White men and White women. Areas of concern pointed out through the MCEOS include the levels of discrimination to which minorities and women are subjected and the perceptual gaps between White and minority officers. The findings here indicate that the EO climate patterns in the USMC and the Navy are very similar. Additionally, the rates of racial discrimination behavior for the two Services are similar. [Ref. 19] Table 3 provides insight on the EO climate with regard to discrimination in the USMC.

As indicated in Table 3, the number of reported incidents of racial discrimination has varied between 1992 and 1995. At the same time, the number and proportion of substantiated reports declined in 1993 and then rose in subsequent years. It is difficult to

determine what these numbers say about the EO climate in the Marine Corps as a whole. Thirty five complaints (eleven of which are substantiated) may not sound like much, given the size of the Marine Corps; and based on DoD records, approximately 50,000 personnel were "non-White." One would obviously prefer to see no complaints of discrimination in an organization--but, without a standard for comparison and more information on the nature of the complaints, there is no way to assess the overall status of EO strictly from the figures in Table 3.

**Table 3**

**Racial Discrimination Complaints Fiscal 1992-1995**

	1992	1993	1994	1995 (to Aug.)
Number reported	30	38	33	35
Number substantiated	9	5	8	11
Percent substantiated	30	13	24	31

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Source: The Equal Opportunity Branch (MPE), Headquarters Marine Corps

**D. THE APPROACH**

Traditionally, the Marine Corps approach to diversity has been assimilation. Newcomers have always been expected to adapt so that they fit the Marine Corps mold. To a certain extent, this approach is required, as each individual Marine must adjust to Marine Corps life and earn the right of passage. Such traditions should not be changed; however, when demographics are considered, the Marine Corps should consider an alternate approach in managing diversity.

The growth in the U.S. labor force now and for the near future will be largely women, minorities, and immigrants. These groups will constitute 85 percent of new



entrants in the work force. [Ref. 13:p.5] For the Marine Corps to continue as an effective fighting force, it must attract, retain, and promote a full spectrum of people.

### **1. The Old Way**

Affirmative Action (AA) has been the chief, often the exclusive, strategy employed by the Marine Corps for including and assimilating minorities and women. AA programs grew out of a series of assumptions [Ref. 13:p.18]:

1. The mainstream in the Marine Corps is made up of White males.
2. Women and minorities are excluded from this mainstream because of widespread racial, ethnic, and sexual prejudices.
3. Such exclusion is unnecessary.
4. It is contrary to both good public policy and common decency.
5. Therefore, legal and social coercion are necessary to bring about change.

AA is a plan, program, policy, or procedure designed to address specific conditions that impede or preclude equal opportunity. Since its inception, AA has produced measurable results, albeit limited, for the Marine Corps. The number of women and minorities entering the service is on the rise; however, this group is also disproportionately clustered at the bottom of the officer rank structure. This phenomenon (often called the "glass ceiling" when referring to women and "premature plateauing" when referring to minorities) exists even in organizations with excellent AA reputations. [Ref. 13:p.21]

The Marine Corps has also fallen victim to the frustrating, and virtually unavoidable, AA cycle. The traditional approach to diversity inevitably creates a cycle of crisis, problem recognition, action, great expectations, disappointment, dormancy, and renewed crisis. [Ref. 13:p.21] This cycle is very clear and unmistakably not only in the Marine Corps, but in the Department of the Navy as a whole.

The problems associated with AA relate directly to the fact that AA was never intended to be a permanent tool. The intent was to fulfill a legal, moral, and social responsibility by initiating special efforts to ensure the creation of a diverse workforce and encourage upward mobility for minorities and women. [Ref. 13:p.23]

In conjunction with AA, the Marine Corps has implemented other programs designed to encourage awareness of and respect for diversity. These programs focus on the ways that men and women, or people of different races, reflect differences in values, attitudes, behavior styles, ways of thinking, and cultural background. [Ref. 13:p.25] With AA, the assumption has been that dysfunctional behavior and attitudes can be attributed to malicious, deliberate decisions. The other programs assume that the undesirable behavior derives from a lack of awareness and understanding. [Ref. 13:p.25]

## **2. The New Way**

The Marine Corps has concentrated so hard on supplementing the current system that an underlying problem has gone uncorrected. Managing diversity takes more than merely supplementing an old system with new programs. [Ref. 13:p.26] Analysis of the underlying reasons as to why the old system no longer works for everyone begins with taking a hard look at the system. To get to the heart of the matter, many questions must be asked [Ref. 13:p.26]: Why doesn't the system work naturally for everyone, and what has to be done to correct it? Will the cultural roots of the Marine Corps allow the leadership to take the necessary corrective action? If not, what root changes does the Marine Corps have to make?

Changing the root culture is at the core of managing diversity. [Ref. 13:p.5] Since this approach takes a long time to implement, the existing AA initiatives that the Marine

Corps has in place must remain. When the long-term changes generated by managing diversity have occurred, the current short-term fix of AA can be put to rest.

On 17 March 1995, the Marine Corps issued Operation Order 1-95, The Campaign Plan to Increase Diversity within the Officer Corps of the Marine Corps. The mission, effective immediately, is to implement a system to access, develop, and institutionalize equitable diversity representation to create an officer corps that reflects the racial composition of America in the 21st Century. [Ref. 3:p.2]

Diagnostic research is an essential step in identifying the Marine Corps culture and systems to determine if they are supportive of managing diversity. [Ref. 13:p.51] In-depth interviews are one way to gather data on the behavior of field grade and company grade officers that relate to, or reflect, their attitudes toward diversity. Additionally, such interviews conducted with minority officers add the perspective of those who have experienced discriminatory behavior first-hand.

### **III. METHODOLOGY**

#### **A. DATA COLLECTION**

This thesis uses information obtained through in-depth interviews to determine various influences on career decisions. The Marine sample consisted of 15 Black Marine officers, both male and female, ranging in grade from Second Lieutenant to Colonel. Additionally, Navy data collected during previous research by Jones and Stigler (1995) on the same subject have been combined with the Marine Corps data to develop a list of potential survey questions suitable for use by the Department of the Navy. The Navy sample consisted of 88 Black officers, 7 Asian/Pacific Islander officers, and 5 Hispanic officers, ranging in seniority from Ensign to Captain. The sample of officers represented various communities, professional backgrounds, and levels of experience. The researcher conducted and recorded personal interviews on audio cassettes. The interviews were transcribed verbatim for ease of analysis.

Due to the relatively small number of Black Marine Officers co-located on most Marine installations, and the difficulty of obtaining a sample that included a range of experience and rank, the researcher conducted all of the interviews at the National Naval Officers Association Annual National Convention on July 18-24, 1995 in Virginia Beach, Virginia. This sample population of officers, therefore, consisted of men and women who were very knowledgeable and aware of current minority issues and initiatives being discussed within the Marine Corps.

Prior to beginning the interview, the researcher made every effort to build rapport with the interviewee by setting a tone of trust and confidentiality. Each interview was conducted in a private room to inspire casual conversation and candid responses to the questions. The interviewee was informed that the conversation was recorded for purposes of accuracy, and that no data traceable to the individual would be used.

Each interviewee seemed to feel at ease and to candidly convey his or her background and experiences, both positive and negative. The Marine officers interviewed appeared comfortable exchanging their stories with the researcher, who has a similar background and experiences as a minority officer.

The interview questions were open-ended and provided ample latitude for the subjects to openly discuss any matter they wanted to address. At times, the responses provided by the interviewee prompted the researcher to use probing questions to further detail and clarify exactly what points were being expressed. (See Appendix A for the Jones and Stigler variation of Sonnenfeld and Kotter's "Model of Career Development" used to develop the open-ended questions presented to the interviewees. Appendix B presents the list of basic questions posed to Marine officers.)

Only fifteen interviews were performed with Marine Officers. The intent was to interview a small group, perform content analysis, and determine whether or not the underlying themes or trends matched those found in the larger survey of Navy officers.

The interview group consisted of eleven male and four female officers. Appendix C provides the exact breakdown of officers in the sample by military occupational speciality, and Appendix D provides demographic data.

In addition to interviewing Black Marine officers, Black Acquisition personnel were also interviewed with regard to the subject of minority recruitment and retention. The intent here was to gain insight on the issues facing minorities who are specifically in the Acquisition field.

## **B. DATA ANALYSIS AND THEME DEVELOPMENT**

The data were compiled on templates (see Appendix E) and then analyzed through the use of content analysis to identify trends and recurring issues related to minority representation among officers in the Marine Corps. These data were then grouped together with other data collected that contained similar issues.

Themes were then developed by analyzing the data groupings of recurring issues or topics and determining the underlying points made by the interviewees. These themes are presented in Chapter IV along with supporting justification. Each justification is reinforced with quotations that exemplify the opinions of the Black officers interviewed. The Navy and Marine Corps themes are then compared to determine which themes are prevalent in both Services.

## **C. DESIGNING POTENTIAL SURVEY QUESTIONS**

The data analysis conducted by Jones and Stigler (on Navy officers) yielded thirteen prominent themes (Appendix F). The analysis conducted on the data collected from the Marine Corps yielded fifteen major themes. The themes that were found to be prevalent in both Services were used as a basis for designing a survey of minority officers that would be administered in follow-on research.



## **IV. ANALYSIS**

### **A. OVERVIEW**

The data analysis yielded fifteen prominent themes. The data collected from Black Marine officers contained virtually the same thoughts, perceptions, and views that were described by the Black Navy officers interviewed by Jones and Stigler. [Ref. 7] The themes are presented along with supporting justification. Each justification is reinforced with quotations that exemplify the opinions of the Black officers interviewed. A comparison of the Marine Corps and Navy data is then presented at the end of this chapter to highlight the similarities and differences between the perceptions and experiences conveyed by the officers from each Service.

### **B. THEME I: MOST BLACK OFFICERS CAME FROM A TWO-PARENT HOUSEHOLD**

#### **1. Theme**

Thirteen of the Black Marine officers interviewed were from two-parent households. The remaining two interviewees had fathers who were deceased. Ten of the Marine officers are from a two-parent household in which both parents worked outside the home. The remaining five Marine officers from two-parent households were raised in a "traditional" family setting, with the father working outside the home and the mother at home.

#### **2. Justification**

This theme was derived directly from demographic information taken from Marine officer interviews. In all except one instance where both parents worked, the jobs held by



the mothers could be generally classified as traditionally female jobs. That is, many of the mothers worked as nurses, teachers, seamstresses, or maids.

**C. THEME II: BLACK OFFICERS WERE EXPOSED TO THE MILITARY AT A YOUNG AGE**

**1. Theme**

Virtually all of the officers interviewed had some kind of exposure to the military at a young age. Exposure ranged from having a father or other relative who served briefly in the military during a war to having a father who made the Armed Forces a career. In many cases this person was a role model and influenced the individual in some way to join the military. Additionally, interviewees who did not have a father or other relative who served were exposed to the military by a brother or sister who joined. Service exposure included all four branches of the military, the Army, Navy, Air Force and Marine Corps.

**2. Justification**

Among the officers interviewed, eleven had fathers who had served in a branch of the Armed Forces. Two of the four remaining officers were exposed to the military through a sibling or other relative at a young age. The remaining two officers were not exposed to the military until they were attending college.

One Marine Captain (05)<sup>1</sup> whose father was a retired Navy enlistee had influences from every branch of the military within his family :

Hmmm, earliest memories I would have to say my father he was prior enlisted, or he was enlisted Navy. Everybody in my family was in the service

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<sup>1</sup>The code that appears here and elsewhere in parentheses (e.g., 05) are used to identify the interviewee and to locate the corresponding transcript and data sheets for the interview. These codes contain no identifying information on the individuals interviewed.

except probably my brother. I've had Marines, Army, Air Force, every member of my family pretty much has been in some branch of the service, but I'm the first officer.

A Marine Lieutenant Colonel (07) also had influences from every branch of the military; however, her influences came via blood relatives in addition to her father:

Well, of course, my dad was World War II for two years or whatever. I had uncles who had gone in the Army. One went in the Marine Corps. And then one who went Air Force.

Another Lieutenant Colonel (06) whose father served in the Army related the following:

I'm a service brat. My father was the biggest influence, although I had two brothers who served ahead of me, two older brothers. It was just sort of expected that we would spend some time in the military. Yea, my -- my number one role model my whole life was my father, both as an athlete -- he was a tremendous athlete, he was -- even though the Army was his career.

One Colonel (04), had no military influences or experiences within his immediate family, but he married the daughter of a servicemen:

Actually it was her father who was the biggest influence. He was a career military man. He was one of the original members of the 99, the all-Black fighter squadron, and he was the one that convinced me to at least give it a look.

A Major (13) whose father was in the Army for a full career had this to say about his life-long experience with the military:

My dad was in the Army for 33 years. So I'm very familiar with the military, so I grew up in the military, so, the military has always been a part of my life.

Another Major (14) conveyed a rather unique experience with her exposure to the military:

My father was in when I was too small to remember. My brother went in after he graduated from high school. It would be two years before I did.

When I went to see the service recruiters the Marine noticed that I didn't come in to see them and he came to identify that point to me that I hadn't stopped in to talk to them. I told him I didn't want to talk to them because I didn't want to join the Marine Corps, and he started questioning me as to why and I proceeded to tell him and he said, 'Well, come on in anyway,' I said, 'No, I don't want to come in,' and so he convinced me to come in and he sat down and talked to me. In the meantime my sister came in because my mom had dropped me off and -- and they were back to pick me up, and I wasn't where I told them I would be, so she came in and she saw me talking to the Marine recruiter. She then started talking to the recruiter who was trying to talk to both of us at this point and he recruited her. About a month later she was in the Marine Corps, and I was still fighting it.

A Second Lieutenant (02) said this about his biggest role model and influence, his father, who retired at the top of the enlisted ranks of the Army:

...but my biggest influence I would have to say is my father because he was in the Army and that -- I liked his style, I guess you could say, the type person that he was and I tried to figure out what made him that type of person, and I figured that the military must have had something to do with it.

**D. THEME III: DECISIONS TO JOIN THE MILITARY WERE TYPICALLY MADE AT AN EARLY AGE, INDEPENDENT OF A RECRUITER'S INFLUENCE. HOWEVER, RECRUITERS WERE INSTRUMENTAL IN DECISIONS TO JOIN THE MARINE CORPS**

**1. Theme**

For the most part, the interviewees became interested in joining the military through someone or something other than an individual recruiter. However, the decision to join the Marine Corps, in the majority of the cases studied, was the direct result of the discussion initiated by a Marine recruiter or Officer Selection Officer. This does not mean that advertising or other forms of recruitment were not influential. The interviewees simply expressed that an active Marine representative played a major role in their decision to join the Marine Corps.

## **2. Justification**

As is a continuing phenomenon observed by Jones and Stigler (Appendix F), the "democratization" of the officer corps has, and continues to take place. That is, the socioeconomic character of the officer corps has apparently changed in that American military leaders no longer come exclusively from the more privileged social strata. Now, a large percentage of officers are drawn from the working class and less prestigious schools and geographical areas. This was found to be true in the Marine officer interviews conducted. For the majority of the interviewees, exposure to the military and the influence of role models cultivated an initial interest to join the military. Nevertheless, although the interviewees themselves had initiated the process of joining the military, it was the initiative of a Marine recruiting representative that inspired them to join the Marine Corps.

One Captain (11) said:

I think I had to wait about four months before they took me to Boot -- enlist to Boot Camp. And that didn't really bother me, but while I was waiting I guess the Marine Corps found out hey, this guy has met the scores for the Air Force, but he has to wait, maybe we can entice him, so they called me up one day and said, 'Hey, I understood that you passed the test. Congratulations, what do you think about the Marine Corps?' I said, 'I really don't know anything about the Marine Corps.' So they said, 'Well, what if we told you,' and I guess this was based on my scores, they already realized that I qualified, 'what if we told you that you could go to Boot Camp tomorrow, would you consider joining the Marine Corps?' I'm like, 'yea.' The Air Force had me on a waiting list. The Marine Corps called me and said we will see you tomorrow, and I said, 'let's go.'

Another Marine Major (01) had this to say when asked about what had influenced him to join the Marine Corps:

I've always been impressed with the Marine Corps but at the time I was trying to make a decision, I knew I wanted to be military, but I chose Air Force just due to convenience. I was at the university at the time. The Air Force was there, they talked to me, they impressed me at the time. That's why I joined the Air Force. A Marine Corps recruiter called me two months after I'd been out of the Air Force. I said okay, I went to an interview, I was impressed with what he had to offer. I was just impressed with his whole demeanor. It was just -- I couldn't even compare anything in the Air Force to what I saw just in that one OSO that day.

A Colonel (04), when asked about his earliest memories regarding the decision to join the Marine Corps, expressed the following:

After having interned, like I said, I started to look for things and once I went and spoke to the Marine recruiter, I have to admit it was the OSO that spoke to me and convinced me to give the Marine Corps a shot. He convinced me of the opportunities that were available. He even brought in a Marine reservist who was a lawyer in that area, a female Black lieutenant colonel.

Another Colonel (12) had very fond memories of the influential Marine representative who actually took the time to ensure that he was well-prepared to embark on a tour in the Marine Corps:

What I really felt in retrospect was the guy made sure I knew what I was getting into because like I told you, I used to always say, 'when do I sign, when do I sign?' He'd say, 'not today, you're not ready yet, we need to talk about this thing a little bit more and if you don't pass the test, as a matter of fact.' I even took and passed the aviation test, but he said, 'we need to talk about it a little bit more.' You know, I went to skeet shooting with him, and you know stuff like that, so that stuff I had never even done before you know until I met this guy and I was, I guess, about 20 years old, so.

A Major (14) had this to say about the initiative of the Marine recruiter who influenced her to join a service in which she initially had no interest:

The Marine noticed that I didn't come in to see them and he came to identify that point to me that I hadn't stopped in to talk to them. I told him I didn't want to talk to them because I didn't want to join the Marine Corps, and he started questioning me why and I proceeded to tell him and he said, 'well,

come on in anyway' and I said, 'no, I don't want to come in,' and so he convinced me to come in and he sat down and talked to me.

**E. THEME IV: THE MAIN OBJECTIVES OF BLACK OFFICERS IN JOINING THE MARINE CORPS WERE EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION, AND SPECIFIC JOB OPPORTUNITIES**

**1. Theme**

The earlier the decision was made to join the Marine Corps, the more likely it was made to obtain education. In the interviews conducted, half of the officers stated that education or financing for education was the primary motivator for joining. The other half of the interviewees stated that the employment opportunity and/or the experience that could be gained from a tour in the Marine Corps was the major incentive to join.

**2. Justification**

Two Naval Academy graduates, Captains (05) and (08), entered the Academy immediately after high school for educational purposes, and said that they were attracted to the Marine Corps over the Navy by what they saw as better opportunities.

Captain (05) stated:

I probably decided my sophomore year at the Academy. And it wasn't necessarily, don't take this the wrong way, I looked at it for the opportunities it provided. The Naval Academy, basically, if you were physically qualified, there was only certain communities that you could go into, surface, air, submarines or whatever, and I saw a little bit more opportunity on the Marine Corps side of the house.

Captain (15) also expressed that the opportunities in the Marine Corps and the lack of better options influenced his decision to join:

I had a chance to observe the military in the same place for a long time and it wasn't a matter of wanting to join the military, I just knew that it was a viable option. It was a good option. And I was just waiting on something

better to come along and nothing better came along, so I decided to join the Marine Corps.

A Major (10) had this to say about her reasons for joining the Marine Corp:

I decided I didn't want to be a teacher like I did when I was in college, and I wanted to find a job in corporate America, and I couldn't find one that I thought would benefit me. And I decided one day that I might as well look into the military because I did think about it when I was younger, about joining and spending some years.

A Colonel (04) said that his reason for joining the Marine Corps was strictly based on the opportunity to gain experience in his chosen field of employment:

When I got out of law school and began looking for a job, I had interned my senior year of law school with the Public Defender's office, I wanted to do trial work and the Marine Corps was one of the few places that could guarantee me the opportunity to do trial work. So I thought I would come into the military, get three years' trial experience under my belt, and get out.

Lieutenant Colonel (06) simply wanted to fulfill his number one career aspiration, and the Marine Corps was the vehicle to do so. The Lieutenant Colonel related the following:

I think with my father being in the military, it was always an option on my mind to be a soldier much like he was, and so I'd say it was my number one career aspiration for my entire life.

Economic factors related to getting a college education were equally strong motives for joining the Marine Corps as were opportunities for employment. The following comments were some of the most common:

A Captain (11) related the following:

I was aware of the education so I figured that the Marine Corps would allow me to do that, and also in my immediate family, nobody had an education beyond high school and I felt -- and I thought college is so expensive, so those two things combined -- listening to commercials and everything else,

you knew that you could get a college education and you could own a home and that really was the attraction.

First Lieutenant (09) needed money for her education:

I always wanted to go to college, so I joined the Reserve, I just worked a lot and it just got really tiring, they'd have good Reserve programs to help with college, so I decided I was going to go active duty. I really wanted to do it anyway, but I wanted to go to college at the same time. So I decided okay, I'll go active duty, get that experience, earn some money, go to school.

Lieutenant Colonel (07) had a job but wanted to show support for her husband (who had joined the Marine Corps) and earn money to use for medical school:

I checked back with the telephone company and they said I could go into the military for three years, they would keep my job open. So a little light went on. I didn't have anything to lose. Plus I would be showing that I was supporting my husband in his endeavors. I was willing to meet him half way or whatever, and we could get the money after three and a half years and go to med school. So that's why I went into the Marine Corps.

A Major (13) was already in college and needed financing to complete school:

I have to do something more than this some kind of way and again, I was paying my own way, so I said well, I've got to do something, I've got to get some kind of financing. Relying back on the experiences that my dad did -- that he had spent in the Army and then my brother had spent some time in the Marine Corps, and I see the wonders that they had did for him and so putting all that together after my first semester in college, I said well, this is what I really want to do. And I decided to pursue the Platoon Leaders Course (PLC) program.

In many of the interviews, a combination of reasons for joining the Marine Corps surfaced. The reasons ranged from financing, education, and experience, to job opportunities and prestige. The following story, conveyed by a Captain (03), encompasses all the above:

A Black guy who went to my high school and graduated a year before I did, he had joined the Marine Reserve and then he came back into town



obviously, and he said he had joined the Reserves and he was going to be going off to college soon. He was wearing his uniform, Marine Corps uniform, I guess he was a PFC or something, and I didn't think he was that much more physically imposing or in better shape than I was to do things, and I thought okay, if he could go to the Marine Corps Reserve, go through basic training, MOS training and stuff, and have a little cadre of funds, money to kind of take in when you got ready to leave home and go to college. I figured okay, that's a viable option, that's a means to an end. So, I decided at that point to say hey, that's going to be my plan, I'm going to do that to move on to something better. It was an opportunity.

**F. THEME V: ALL INTERVIEWEES EXPERIENCED SOME SORT OF DISCRIMINATION IN THE MARINE CORPS**

**1. Theme**

All interviewees reported varying perceptions with regard to discrimination when asked about their general experiences in the Marine Corps. Experiences also tend to vary by the particular point of an officer's career.

**2. Justification**

The justification for this theme lies in the following excerpts. The reader should note that the experiences related by the male officers are similar to those of the female officers with respect to perceived discrimination; however, the underlying reasons for the discrimination tend to be gender specific. That is, female officers tend to think that discrimination has been a direct result of their gender as opposed to their race.

A Second Lieutenant (02) revealed that his experiences at Officers Candidate School (OCS) had disturbed him:

I did have some very rude awakenings and harsh experiences at OCS. There were Marines there who would call themselves by that term "redneck" and it was common with them. It was okay. Even centering around me, and I was very uncomfortable with that.

Second Lieutenant (02) went on to disclose that he had attended a Historically Black College (HBC) and that his first tour in the Fleet Marine Force turned out to be a far better experience than the harsh racial realities at OCS.

A Captain (14) speaks of positive experiences at OCS and related the following story:

I didn't really see any kind of like racism and stuff. I guess one of the things that prevented that from happening was my platoon commander was Black and my platoon sergeant was Black. But there was White guys in the platoon, mostly White guys in the platoon, but-- there was-- they really weren't racist. They were you know it wasn't really quite visible to me.

A Captain (05) and Naval Academy graduate said that he never experienced racial discrimination at his commissioning source. Not until his first command, when his troops mentioned something to him, did he feel that he was the object of discrimination:

I never really had any problems because from the beginning I let people know how far I'm willing to be pushed. I sat down guidelines or whatever. Then the fact that I was prior enlisted, it gave me a head's up on a lot of my contemporaries because I knew a lot more about the service. I knew a lot more about the basic things that they were being indoctrinated during plebe summer. So, if anything, it kind of put me in a leadership role because the upperclassmen, they saw the prior enlisted guys making squad leaders or whatever, so I really didn't have a problem. ...I think the time that it hit me that he (first Commanding Officer) was going out of his way to be difficult to me was when the enlisted Marines came up and started saying things to me like, hey, I noticed that you get treated differently than the other officers in the command.

Lieutenant Colonel (06) had this to say about his first experiences while attending the Officers Candidates Course (OCC):

I started getting heat and all, but it wasn't from White -- the majority population, it was from Black drill instructors who pushed us a little harder. I think the Black candidates got pushed a little harder by the Black drill instructors who were trying to make sure that we were up to the challenge of

being Marine officers. I think there was some adjustment with some of the candidates who may have been from -- White candidates who may have been from a background where they weren't used to having Black leadership. And as we changed -- between billets -- the candidate platoon commander or candidate platoon sergeant, candidate fire team leader, whatever you were, I think there were some guys that when you were in a position to give orders, I think they found that a little difficult.

The experience of Captain (11), who came up through the Warrant Officer ranks, turned out to be different from all of the others. This officer continually had his superiors telling him that the things that he wanted to accomplish as a Marine officer, such as professional military education courses via correspondence, were too challenging for him.

His reply was:

In my mind, I love this Marine Corps, and I'm not naive. The reality is that's part of that racism that's subtle, if you will. Yes. I've taken -- I've taken AWS courses while I was a staff sergeant, and I was told that I probably couldn't do it. When I was a warrant officer, I took a command and staff extension course. Prior to taking it, I asked some of my superiors including a couple of Lieutenant Colonels what they thought about it, they told me -- one of them even told me it was too challenging for a warrant officer. I took that to mean that I wasn't smart enough, not just as a warrant officer, but also as a minority.

A total of four Black female officers were interviewed. When asked which characteristic--race or gender--most often contributed to any perceived discrimination, these women overwhelmingly indicated that it was their gender.

A Major (10), when asked about her early experiences as a Black female officer in the Marine Corps, referred to her time in OCS:

Well, well, the uniqueness about it, there was only two Black females in my OCS class, I wasn't treated any different than the White females or anybody else. I mean we were all equal. I didn't come across any racial problems. The only problems I had were female problems because the male Marines who were prior enlisted made some comments about female Marines and

that got to be a big, big deal -- a big deal in going through OCS, but that's about it.

She then spoke about a unit in which she was assigned duty as a supply officer:

I felt like, and that's the first and only duty station I've ever been at where I felt like I was, I'm the bottom of the totem pole, because I was female, Black and a ground supply officer.

A Captain (08) had this to say about her experiences as a Marine officer and what she perceived as her biggest problem:

Well, I guess because, you know, I'm just the only Black female running around so I have many White female friends and nothing that minority or non-minority female complain about or has concerns about is any different. So, I'd say just being female in general in the Marine Corps is the biggest problem.

A Major (01) provided the following comments when asked about his least rewarding experience thus far in the Marine Corps:

My CO turned out to be very prejudiced in his thinking. He went so far as to -- we had a social function of officers, about thirty officers in our squadron -- and he proceeded to tell Black jokes, racist jokes right there in front of me with no regard for my wife or myself who were standing right there. We departed immediately afterwards.

A Captain (05) related an incident that occurred at The Basic School:

Out of the 38 lieutenants in the platoon, there were nine Black lieutenants, seven of us were Academy grads, two of the guys I had been prior enlisted with, and one of the guys was from my hometown. So we were very close and as a matter of fact, out of our five-man room, there were three African American officers, all Academy grads, and then the one guy I talked about from my hometown, and one Oriental officer. We got in a situation one time where we were sitting together in chow when -- and basically hanging out, and the Student Platoon Commanders (SPCs) pull all the Black officers aside and wanted to know why we were hanging out together. Professionally, that left a bad taste in my mouth because we weren't doing anything that was any different from any other clique or group of officers in the company, it was just because of the color of our skin that we stood out

or whatever. And their justification for doing it was well, you're setting a bad example because when you get to the fleet, if you see a cluster of Black officers that stay to themselves, that's sending a signal to the enlisted Marines or enlisted Sailors or whoever you have that there's segregation among the ranks. I've never been in a command where there's been more than two Black officers in the command, never. There might be several Black officers or a dozen or a hundred throughout the base, but I've never been anywhere where there's like 20 officers in the battalion and five of them are Black. It was just an abnormally high percentage just because it was a training environment, and we all flowed through together because we graduated at the same time. And that was the only reason it happened.

Colonel (04), when asked if his race had helped or harmed him throughout his career, gave this perspective:

Now, I guess you can look at that in two ways, as a Marine and then as a -- as an individual. Well, I've got to say that I think any minority, not just myself personally, but any minority I think suffers to some extent by virtue of their minority status. Just in terms of a lack of understanding or appreciation or a lack of being designed culturally like those things that we as a people embrace. But in terms of an overall career, I don't know that I've been hurt at all by it, but I certainly can say that I don't think I've been helped one bit by my minority status. Maybe the best way to explain or to perhaps give an illustration is to give another example. The USMC put together a blue ribbon panel, the best of the best. I said you know you want me to go out and try and sell the Marine Corps \_\_\_\_\_ division, if you will, to these young folks, Blacks and minorities, but when you put together that panel, you didn't select one woman to be on the panel, nor did you select a single minority, you know, why? I believe his answer because I could see the look or expression on his face that until I said it, it never dawned on him. It never crossed his mind. Herein lies the problem. We pay a lot of lip service, we want to do things, make things better, make improvements, we being the institution of the military, for minorities, but yet when it comes time to make those kinds of decisions that can have an impact, either we don't think about it or we do think about it and make it a conscious decision to exclude Blacks for the most part. But I think that's part of the problem as well and that's just consciousness or awareness and in some cases perhaps a lack of sincerity and conviction.

A Lieutenant Colonel (07) provided this response when asked how she felt about her career progression:

I feel every time I change duty stations, I have to prove myself all over again. And it should not be that way. Because I'm a female in a male society. And that's not going to change in my generation. I'm going to have to take the initiative to do a lot of things to make myself seen. My absence speaks volumes. At those functions, at those little whatevers that people -- that commands do, if I'm not there, it's noticed much more so than it would be for other people. So, I will make myself be there. I will be social. I will be cordial. I'll work harder. I'll go out in the field. I'll do what I have to do. So, somebody knows, hey, well, yea, she was here, she knew how to do that.

**G. THEME VI: DISCRIMINATION TENDS TO BE ISOLATED AND IS NOT A DOMINANT ELEMENT IN OVERALL CAREER EXPERIENCES OF BLACK OFFICERS**

**1. Theme**

Although every interviewee experienced racism, as discussed above, it is not a dominant element in their career experiences. Numerous statements were made, and rarely did an individual strictly voice negative opinions on the issue of race.

**2. Justification**

Interviewees were asked many difficult questions regarding to race and racism experienced throughout their career as a Marine officer. The majority of the officers interviewed, despite suffering temporary or minor setbacks, maintain a positive view of the Marine Corps and believe that it is making positive strides toward equal treatment and acceptance of people of all races. When asked to discuss their thoughts and perceptions on race and career choices, virtually all interviewees said that they were generally treated fairly. However, almost half of the interviewees mentioned what they perceived as isolated-race related incidents or being fortunate enough to have superiors who were either result-oriented or very people-oriented.

A Colonel (04) basically summed up the feeling of the entire group with the following response, when asked about his general experiences as a Black Marine officer:

By and large the majority of my experiences have been positive, but that isn't to say there haven't been some negative experiences along the way. I think there are some extraordinarily gifted, talented people in the services, and that there are a lot of things that the services can do for you in terms of making you a better person, an individual that contributes to society. I think that day has long since passed where you had that (discrimination) overtly. And I think a lot of the things that I've pointed out to you to include the situation with the panel personnel, I don't think it was an intentional or deliberate vindictive kind of action that people were taking. I think it's a lack of sensitivity, a lack of exposure, just a lack of appreciating the differences, the needs, the -- there is such a thing as a White and a Black mentality, and I guess what I'm trying to say is -- is that the Black mentality has very little effective voice in the Marine Corps. The White mentality prevails and more or less imposes their will in a pretty insensitive kind of way, if that's a better way to say what I'm trying to.

A Captain (05) expressed his displeasure concerning an incident at The Basic School where the SPCs questioned and criticized the Black officers for seemingly segregating themselves from the rest of the company. He added a positive twist to the situation with the following comment:

I'd like to give them the benefit of the doubt and think they have a sincere interest in promoting racial harmony and equality across all boards in the Marine Corps, and I'd like to think that it was an attempt by the Marine Corps just to get some insight or whatever. So I honestly can't say what their motivation was.

A Major (13) looked upon his minority status the same way he viewed all of his tasks as a Marine officer, as a challenge:

If you realize that there's some cultural things and other kind of differences that I think over a period of time will stick out, so the bottom line is, as a minority, if you just say well, I'm a minority and so the system's against me, well, I don't know if the system is as much against you as that you're spotlighted and the expectation of you can either be thought of as being less

or expect more of you, so being a minority to me is a spotlight. You're always looked at and so your challenge is to be looked at and to be looked at the way that you expect to be looked at as a Marine officer.

A Major (01) learned a very valuable lesson from his first Commanding Officer, who made racial jokes during a Command social function, and has this view of the Marine Corps:

I still believe in the Marine Corps. Nothing I've learned from that first incident, my very first CO, was that first of all, I should have spoken up regardless of the rank of the offender or whatever, I should have spoken up. And then second, I think the most important reason is that the way one or a few behave or act isn't indicative of the entire Marine Corps officer population. Not all commanding officers or COs think the same way the CO did in the very first unit I was in. So, and it's because of that, I like the Marine Corps and I keep that in mind when you get a new CO or PCS somewhere else, I keep it in mind that hey, I may run into incidents where I may have a CO that doesn't like me because of the color of my skin, or whatever, and he may come out and make comments at parties or even behind my back, well, I've got to keep in mind that's not what the Marine Corps is founded on and that it's just an opinion of a few individuals and not the opinion of the overall Marine Corps.

A Colonel (12) passed on the following insight:

I don't think that the prejudice or race issues do not exist. Yes, they exist. They existed when I came up. But see I know that and so I'm going to fight through that, I'm going to still perform and I'm going to make myself indispensable to the organization because it's just like a business, if you're Black and I'm White, and you're a salesman, and you -- you're my top salesman, do you think I'm going to care about what color you are if you're producing for me? If you're bringing money, green money into my organization, do you think I care about your race? Nah. I'm going to give you your just due because you're out there, you're doing it, you're making money for this organization. Because the bottom line in this organization is to make money, and you're bringing money in. You're the top salesman. So, do I care about your color? Heck no. I may have some deep-seated feelings but my actions are sure as heck going to be modified because you put out.



A Major (10) simply expressed the following:

As minorities we have to be aware that those things are there so we don't just drop our guard entirely, but don't wear it like a shield, that kind of thing, because when you do that then you're actually being one of them. I think the Marine Corps is trying to do good by minorities. I know that there's a lot of talk that has been going on about what's been going on in the Marine Corps but if you look at the Marine Corps now and you look at what it was several years ago a lot of us wouldn't be here. There were very few, but it was harder -- it was hard back then. And I think with the mind-set of the Commandant and General Christmas -- and the previous commandant-- I think the Marine Corps is headed towards opening its doors and saying, 'hey, you're just as good, you're just as equal as a majority officer, and you don't -- you don't have to fight as hard anymore.'

A Second Lieutenant (02) said he felt fortunate to have a chain of command that is working hard to ensure equal opportunity:

... there's actually a general there who says you will take care of your Marines and you will not discriminate. And he doesn't wash that under the rug, just say it and let it go in someone's ear and right out the other, he actually sees to it that things get taken care of in the right way.

#### **H. THEME VII: MOST BLACK MARINE OFFICERS BELIEVE THAT THEY HAVE TO DO MORE THAN THEIR WHITE COUNTERPARTS TO GAIN THE SAME RECOGNITION**

##### **1. Theme**

Almost every interviewee expressed the belief that they are somehow held to a higher standard than their non-minority counterpart. Whether the cause of this feeling is self-inflicted or inflicted by someone else, the interviewees perceived that they must perform better and work harder to receive the same recognition and/or respect that is generally bestowed upon non-minority officers.

## **2. Justification**

Along with the normal or expected duties of a leader or manager, the Black officers must often manage the response to his or her race in the workplace. African-American professionals, in general, have the added challenge of managing their responses and reactions to intended and unintended racist statements and behavior regardless of whom the activity is directed. [Ref. 7:p.66]

A Colonel (12) related the following when asked to share some of his perceptions and experiences as a Black Marine officer:

Well, it's a given to me. I mean, you know, my dad told me that in life you know by nature of skin color people try to value judge you, so you are going to have to work very hard to overcome that, you know, to hit the ground running, so when people say that, 'gee whiz, this guy is good,' you've got to work hard for that. You know? And there's a, you know, widely-held belief among most 'minority officers or Black officers,' the guys I talk to that they kind of feel they have to work twice as hard. Whether it's true, I don't know. We haven't tested that hypothesis yet. Okay? But it's a feeling. I know that -- and maybe it's the pressure one puts on one's self to perform, to do a good job.

Another Colonel (04) had this to say about his career thus far:

Personally, I think that I've had to work harder than some of my White counterparts. I have no complaints over my career personally in terms of myself. I think I've been successful to some extent, I don't attribute any of my success to the system, if you will.

A Captain (11) noted the following during a discussion about his thoughts regarding Black officers:

The fact that I think -- racism aside -- we'd be fooling ourselves, I don't care what minority you are, but as minority folks, Blacks in particular, you'd be fooling yourself if you don't realize that you do have to work harder, you do have to -- you are held to a higher standard to succeed. It's reality. And it's not a military reality, it's a reality of this country.

Still another Black Marine officer, a Second Lieutenant (02) with less than two years active duty, had this to say:

As a Black Marine officer I feel like every day I walk out the door in my uniform, all eyes are on me. I don't think that's fair, but I think it's true. I think that the things that I would do as a Black Marine officer are magnified by probably about three thousand times in comparison to those things that a non-minority Marine officer would do. I think that people look to me to actually perform at a higher level than my counterparts, the non-minorities.

**I. THEME VIII: THERE IS A PREVALENT VIEW THAT BLACK OFFICERS MUST BECOME ADEPT AT SOCIALIZING IN MAJORITY ENVIRONMENTS TO BE SUCCESSFUL**

**1. Theme**

This theme addresses success as a result of socialization. This theme focuses on the notion that Black officers must not only perform exceptionally well in regular duties, but must also perform well in the majority social environment to have a successful career.

**2. Justification**

The Marine Corps workplace often extends to social gatherings, particularly in the officer ranks. Well known is the fact that one must attend non-mandatory social functions or risk missing out on what could be a source of vital information or the opportunity to build esprit de corps and other career enhancing friendships or bonds.

A Captain (03) noted that his career experience revolved around the subject of social acceptance and how difficult it was to achieve:

I would say it's more of a social aspect of acceptance that you have to work toward. Put your people at ease and make sure that they are comfortable with your presence to a certain degree, and this is over nine years of active service, there's a certain amount of apprehension, whether it's intimidation or just wanting not to say or do the wrong things based on what they may -- the majority of the population may be used to doing as far as jokes or

colorful comments and things that you have to at least give them a level of comfortableness with. They can't do it themselves. You have to approach them vice them approaching you. And once you make yourself approachable, you can overcome some of the social things that either you'll be accepted or you won't be accepted, but you won't know until you make the first step. You can't automatically rely on the other majority of the population to automatically take the first step, whether it's going to lunch, whether it's going to the "O" club on Friday and hanging out, whether it's going to the different little parties that other officers may have within the command. If you're not part of the social things that you don't have to be a part of, generally you tend to miss out on information, and it may not be an intentional thing.

Captain (03) later gave this response when asked if he thought that he had been treated fairly with regard to career decisions:

I would say yes, I've been somewhat fortunate in assignments and jobs that I have had. I think the importance of it is that everyone should actually feel comfortable with their career path and their job assignments, working with professional individuals and having that senior leadership directly above you making conscious efforts to make you comfortable with okay, this will be good for you as your next assignment or your next job, and I really don't think the majority of the minority population gets that. I think too often they don't get it, or they get it too late in their particular careers, or in their career path. And part of that is due to that social demographics and they did not socialize at the Officers' Club on Friday night with the CO over drinks about what he thinks he should do, that subordinate on his next job assignment or what does he need to do to be successful.

A Captain (15) gave the following response when asked if race had helped or harmed him thus far throughout his career:

...we don't do the same things. We don't hang out at the same places and they--in the Marine Corps a lot of evaluation is-- not a lot, but a portion of that has significant impact and I think it should have no impact, and that's your social interaction. Because they--if that's the case, they should be knocked down because they can't interact with a lot of the folks who they've got to deal with.

A Major (13) felt that two main factors greatly affected the degree of success that can be realized in the Marine Corps:

There's two reasons, when I did a study, I think it was five or six years ago, most of the minorities at that time were in the combat service support field. The problem is that your senior leadership is made out of your combat arms and your aviation types. So, first off, be it a minority or be whatever you are, you're in the combat service support field, and so that right there puts you in a different category from where your senior leadership is; i.e., aviation and combat arms. Now, if you throw on top of that the fact being that maybe you're the only minority and when you go to a unit, this place or that place, and then your cultural, or your social -- your socializing skills, and quite frankly, it's taken me -- it's taken me 14 years, 13 years, to learn the socialization process, to learn how to socialize in a majority environment, be that the club, or be that some other places. When you put your socialization skills that you have to have or to utilize to be part of the team, plus the fact in that you're already in a field that--that's kind of, I won't say second-class, but a field that's kind of looked at differently than where you get all your senior leadership from in your combat arms and your aviation field. There's some things that are stacked up against you, but that's not to say that you can't be successful, but that's just the realities of our institution, our system.

**J. THEME IX: BLACK OFFICERS DO NOT WANT TO BE TREATED DIFFERENTLY--NEITHER BETTER NOR WORSE THAN WHITES**

**1. Theme**

This theme generally addresses the treatment of Black officers. Interviewees observed that they did not want to be treated any differently than their non-minority counterparts.

**2. Justification**

A vast majority of the interviewees emphasized that they did not want to receive any form of preferential treatment. Black officers only wish to be treated on equal terms--in all ways-- as the majority officers with whom they must work.

In responding to the question, "Do you think being a minority has hurt or helped you?", A Colonel (12) said:

I think it's a factor, whether it's a positive factor or negative factor, I don't know. It depends on the individual. I don't let my color limit me and I don't think because of my color that I should be pushed ahead. All I want is an equal chance to compete just like anybody else, don't not give me the job because of my color. Okay. And don't give me the job because of my color. Give me the job because of who I am. If you say my name, I want somebody to say damn, that's a good officer. Okay? I don't want anybody to say well, yea, he's a Black officer, put him in. I want them to say yea, man, that guy is good. Have I been temporarily hurt in -- and I mean when you say hurt, in a specific instance where I think somebody marked me a certain place because of color, yes, I think so. But if you ask me have I ever ran into the adult racists, I think yea, a couple in 23 years of service.

A Captain (03) at times finds himself somewhat bewildered when considering the subject of race and the impact that it may have. He provided these thoughts:

I feel that yea, at times there have been some specific impacts on the performance evaluation systems that make me wonder if it would be different if number one, I was not different ethnically than my reporting senior, or number two, that as he compares me with my counterparts, he either considers okay, I have a leg up because the Marine Corps needs minorities, so I don't need to be as charitable to him in ranking, or that hey, I wonder if he feels there's an obligation to help out his cultural shadow, so to speak, the guy that looks like him, walks like him, talks like him, and that's probably the only big impact that I think I have experienced.

**K. THEME X: BLACK OFFICERS BELIEVE THAT THEY HAVE BEEN SLIGHTED IN TERMS OF RESPECT AND REWARDS**

**1. Theme**

This theme addresses recognition in the form of formal awards and/or professional respect. The theme is based on the perception among Black officers that they are treated differently than their White counterparts with respect to rewards for accomplishments and the credibility one carries by virtue of rank and experience.

## **2. Justification**

Intended or unintended discriminatory behavior directed toward Black officers widens the gap between the actual and the ideal situation. Another way that the gap is widened is through a lack of professional support or recognition. [Ref. 7:p.72] It goes without saying that every Marine deserves to have the trust and confidence that accompanies the rank they hold, regardless of race, ethnic group, gender or some other demographic characteristic. The following excerpts indicate that this may not be the case for all Marine officers, particularly those who are Black.

A Major (10) recalled the following perceptions about a tour:

I didn't think I was given the opportunity to -- I don't think I was allowed to be a Marine officer there. Actually I felt like one of the troops or one of the staff NCOs because I don't think I was treated as a Marine officer there. I felt like everything I did was questioned, even if I had previously done it before, and I did it the same way the next time, somebody questioned it. 'Why are you doing this?' I mean, instead of letting me do the job I was sent there to do, and maybe brief after the situation was over or before I had to do it, it wasn't like I didn't know what I was doing. I always had to prove that I knew what I was doing before I did it kind of thing. That's why I felt like I wasn't -- I wasn't treated as an officer there.

A Captain (14) had this general perception regarding fitness reports and personal awards:

I think I have been a victim of racism on fitness reports, and when it comes to awards, that I think that I deserve. I think it's a race issue. I don't have any proof of that, but when I see the other White guys doing the same job that I'm doing, they're getting awards for it, and I'm not.

When asked about his least rewarding experience thus far in his Marine Corps career, a Captain (14) added:

Probably the lack of recognition that I receive for what I think is a substantial amount of work for the Marine Corps, especially when it comes to personal awards, I just don't think I've been recognized for those accomplishments.

A Colonel (04) provided this feedback when asked if race had helped or harmed him throughout his career:

Oh, I've got to say that I think it has hurt, but it has hurt only from the standpoint that I see from where I sit little things that still go on that are race-related. As an example, even now as a staff officer and when we have staff meetings, I'm of the opinion, and this isn't perception on my part, I think it's a reality because I've seen it done, I think that I can make a recommendation or say something at a staff meeting and the CG or the chief of staff will almost routinely question whatever it is that I say. Whereas, if that same recommendation were to come from a White male, I think it would not be questioned. Whatever it is the minority has to say is questioned, not necessarily critically questioned, but it's not accepted *carte blanche* like it is if a White male says it. I think there's an air of credibility that a White male carries with him for no other reason than he is White and he is male, whereas, minorities, there is no such air of credibility.

The same Colonel (04) goes on to illustrate his point, referring to the history of Blacks and women in the Marine Corps:

In my opinion, I don't think it was a mistake and I don't believe that it was just luck of the draw that the Marine Corps made a White female a General Officer before ever having selected a Black male. I don't think that it was a mistake that the first Black to become a General in the Marine Corps was an aviator. Let's face it, the ground side of the house runs and controls the Marine Corps. The Marine Corps isn't threatened by making an aviator a General Officer. I'll tell you the day I see a Black O3 get selected for General Officer will be the day I believe we've arrived at that point. Up until then, I think that just societal pressures have dictated more so than a desire or an earnest effort on the part of the Marine Corps to select Black officers. Now, those Black officers that have been selected for General up to this point are truly very talented and gifted individuals. That's not to say they should not have been selected. I only make that comment to say but for societal pressures, I don't believe they would have been selected in the first instance and the fact that there have been females that have -- and White females at that -- that have been selected and made General Officers before we ever had



a Black one, I think speaks volumes about the attitude of the Marine Corps with regard to Blacks.

**L. THEME XI: A VAST MAJORITY OF BLACK OFFICERS FEEL MOST REWARDED WHEN TRUSTED TO PERFORM AND WHEN PROVIDING LEADERSHIP TO SUBORDINATES**

**1. Theme**

Although many Black officers feel that they must work harder to obtain formal recognition and certain levels of respect, a large portion (13 of 15) believe that their greatest intrinsic reward involves trust or confidence. That is, they are most fulfilled professionally and personally when they are trusted to lead and perform their duties. Additionally, Black officers also tend to find great satisfaction in leading and assisting their subordinates.

**2. Justification**

When the interviewees were asked to disclose their most rewarding experience thus far in their career as a Marine officer, almost without exception, their response involved being trusted to hold a leadership position and leading subordinates. Though themes VIII and XI are important, they tend to be overshadowed by the more intrinsic rewards experienced when leading Marines.

A Captain (15) recalled his tour as a Platoon Commander with fondness as he related the following experience:

I had everyone from the rank of Gunny down to PFC. I had everything from Black, Guamanian, to whatever. I had every problem from alcoholism, beating your wife, to everything. And my folks respected me, because I could deal with all of it. And I think that's what made the most impact on junior troops and they looked out for me, hands down, and if they weren't, you knew it. So, that's where I was definitely the one in charge. The CO had to rely on me for certain things.

When Colonel (12) recalled his most rewarding experience, he remembered the Marines who worked for him:

My most rewarding experience as a Marine officer is always positively affecting the lives of young folks you know for instance, A young private when I was a Lieutenant, a Second Lieutenant, in my platoon who I think just retired from the Marine Corps as a Master Sergeant, but he was a problem child. Okay, you sit down and you talk to him. And he retired a master sergeant. Or when you see Marines that you served with and they come and say hey, sir, do you remember that time you talked to me about so and so, I always remember that and really appreciated it. So those type of things.

A Major (10) said her most rewarding experience was the time a Commanding Officer expressed his confidence in her:

...when trusted to do the job--He said 'you're here now, and I know everything is under control.' And it like floored me. It was like he has that much respect for me and that much confidence in me that -- to know that I was going to take care of it and in fact, after that he told me he said, 'I need a -- an OIC at the rear party, and you're it.' I'm thinking here we have Colonels and Lieutenant Colonels but they have their own little jobs that were left behind in the division headquarters and he left me behind to take care of the whole conglomerate mess and I thought wow, and that made me feel really good.

A Colonel (06) reflected upon one of his most inspirational moments when he was a Second Lieutenant:

I've got to say one of the greatest inspirations for being a Marine officer is the sparkle in a young Black Marines eyes when they see you in a position of leadership, and that has been from the time I was a Second Lieutenant to the time that I had my first command.

A Second Lieutenant (02) echoed the Colonel (06) when he recalled reporting to his first command and actually assisted one of his subordinates in becoming an officer:

I would have to say actually reporting to my first command and seeing the enlisted minority Marines look at me and then look up to me for guidance and whatnot. That and something else that just happened, too, was a

rewarding experience for me, now that I think about it. There was a Sergeant of Marines that got accepted for the MESEP program aboard my command. And I actually just felt like I was passing a torch onto him when I started giving him information about OCS and the basic school or what have you and actually what it's like to be a minority officer. That felt rewarding for me because it's like the each-one-teach-one theory, I actually had the chance to give to someone.

A Captain (03) commented on the humbling experience of command:

Probably the most rewarding experience as a Marine officer was having the opportunity to command a Battery, an H and S Battery, of Marines. Various MOSs, an S1, O1s to motor T Com, supply, and actually feeling a sense of reward in the development as far as physical fitness, training-wise, accomplishing the mission, and them obviously showing a level of enthusiasm for me as their leader. You can't force people to be proud of you as their leader, but when you receive some type of reward or you see the esteem on their faces because they want to introduce you to their wives as their commander or they think very highly of you and it's obvious, it's a humbling thing. It's very humbling to the soul.

## **M. THEME XII: MOST BLACK OFFICERS PLAN TO RETIRE FROM THE MARINE CORPS**

### **1. Theme**

As the theme suggests, with few exceptions, most of the officers interviewed plan to someday retire from the Marine Corps. Various reasons were given in support of these plans, but most related to the single enjoyment of being a Marine and having fun at one's job.

### **2. Justification**

Eleven of the officers interviewed plan to remain in the Marine Corps until eligible for retirement. The remaining four were unsure as to their future in the Marine Corps. Those who did plan to remain on active duty until retirement cited reasons such as time served and enjoyment. All of the officers already eligible for retirement commented that they would retire as soon as the Marine Corps stops being fun.

The interviewees who were unsure as to their future career plans said that their future in the Marine Corps was dependent upon promotion. One interviewee based her uncertainty on the number of barriers to success. For example, a First Lieutenant (09) provided the following:

I don't know, and I haven't made a decision if I'm going to stay in the Marine Corps, mainly because I know I have a lot of credentials. I left college very promising. I had what it took to get to the top. I chose to go in the military and the Marines because of the my goals and the military has always interested me. But, I don't want to get stuck, and I'm afraid that if I stay in the Marine Corps, and I'll have so much time invested, and then I'm going to get passed over for Major. And I don't want that. I want to be successful and it worries me that there are so many barriers up that my future in the Marine Corps may not happen, especially with my MOS field. We've never ever had a battalion commander that's been from any minority group, Black, Hispanic, or female.

The following excerpts are of interest because they indicate that minorities, specifically Blacks, tend to remain in the Marine Corps regardless of the perceived, and sometimes real barriers that they encounter. Additionally, these excerpts provide insight concerning the inner feelings of the group, which may prove useful in matters of retention.

A Major (10) expressed her feelings about the importance of getting promoted on time:

Well, I didn't really decide, to tell you the truth, that the Marine Corps was going to be my career until about four years ago. I always thought that I was going to get out, do my years and get out and do something else. And it wasn't actually until I got passed over for Major that I decided that, you know, I got really upset about it, and decided that this is what I wanted to be, wanted to do. I guess it was like saying to myself that the Marine Corps was where I wanted to be and the career I wanted to have for myself, and that I can retire at 20, and I know I'm going to get there. Once beyond 20, as long as I'm still having fun in the Marine Corps, I'll stay around and so far I'm still having fun.

A Lieutenant Colonel (07) provided this insight:

The reason I decided to stay is because when I looked around, there was nobody else (officers) that looked like me. But, there were so many young people at that time. We're talking about early '80s.

A Major (13) based his decision to stay in the Marine Corps on the opportunity to have an impact:

- I had originally planned to do the two and a half years, take the experience of being a Marine officer, and go out in the civilian market and make pretty good money. What turned it around was that I got involved in the assignments that I had and I just -- just love the Marine Corps. I've loved the assignments that I've had, they've been very challenging assignments. There have been things I want to do and it's allowed me in my own way to hopefully make an impact.

A young Second Lieutenant (02) addressed commitment, duty, and role models:

I see now that there is more to it than just what I was thinking as a Marine officer. There's more to it than going to work for a Fortune 500 company and making five, ten, fifteen-thousand dollars more than what I'm making right now. Well, when we talk about that word "commitment" that really means something, and it means more to some than others. After hearing it come from the mouths of folks who have actually walked the walk and talked the talk, then I know that I have to stay in, it's my duty to stay around and to be a good Marine officer. I think I will be doing the Marine Corps and the enlisted Marines a disjustice if I decide to get out and move on. And so at this time retiring from the Marine Corps is definitely in the plan.

**N. THEME XIII: BLACK OFFICERS BELIEVE THAT THE DEFENSE DOWNSIZING HAS HEIGHTENED COMPETITIVENESS FOR PROMOTION**

**1. Theme**

Downsizing was generally addressed from a personal perspective. Officers did not express very many personal concerns with regard to downsizing. However, interviews

revealed that downsizing concerns focus on the increased necessity to be productive and remain productive.

## **2. Justification**

All interviewees were asked how downsizing has affected their career decisions and aspirations. Twelve officers responded that downsizing, in and of itself, has no particular affect on their decision to remain in the Marine Corps. However, the affect on behavior appears to be the opposite, although many of the officers are confident that their record speaks for itself.

A Captain (11) made the following comments:

I truthfully, and I'm not patting myself on the back, but I personally feel that my record speaks for itself. I mean I could never be a victim of downsizing unless they wanted to get rid of people with more than 20 years. Okay. Other than that, if they're talking about performance, if they're talking about getting the job done, I'm not even a candidate but if it was anybody over 20 years all of a sudden, oh, yea, then I would be gone, but downsizing does not enter my mind because I know what my track record is.

A Lieutenant Colonel (07) conveyed her confidence with the following statements when asked if downsizing impacts her:

No! Because I knew I was good. No, I do not intend to get out and go look for a job. So, I figured I'm good, I'll leave when I want to leave. They're not going to make me leave. So I really wasn't worried about it.

A Lieutenant Colonel (06) provided this insight:

These fluctuations in size are just a matter of the course of history, current politics, and economics. I mean it could have an impact on me. It's had an impact on some peers. But generally speaking, the institution is always making judgments on you. Your annual fitness reports or your next duty assignment tells you how they feel about you in large measure, so I'm getting positive feedback still, and hopefully that means I'm giving something positive. So I think as long as you're productive like that, in a corporate

sense, you shouldn't feel threatened. And so I don't feel--for some reason--I have never felt personally threatened by downsizing. Now my concern is are we doing it right for the health of the nation.

A Captain (03) summed up the effect of downsizing by saying:

Well, from that standpoint, downsizing has only heightened the competitiveness of the service, and I don't think it really changed my outlook on why I want to be a Marine officer or whether or not I want to retire. The only thing it did is say to me it's going to be a lot more competitive. And because of that competitiveness, I need to be prepared for that possible separation.

A Second Lieutenant (02) described the impact of downsizing as not only a military problem, but a nationwide one as well:

Being honest with you, I'd have to say that everybody stands a chance of getting thrown out, and then it's like well, we love you, but we can't keep you. But that's going on everywhere though. Even in the civilian sectors. Everybody is downsizing, everybody is trying to cut back because the economy just -- it can't sustain the work force anymore--and so if I got out of the Marine Corps, would it make a difference?--I really don't think so because everybody is doing it, everybody is downsizing. So, I think I would want to stay where I could be most helpful and right now that's the Marine Corps.

A Colonel (04) addressed the issue of downsizing from an organizational viewpoint and touched on the subject of recruitment and retention:

I think downsizing has done a couple of things for me. I'm not certain that I could encourage, particularly a young Black collegiate or a guy fresh out of med, or law school to come into the Marine Corps for the purposes of considering it a career. I think I can encourage anybody to come into the Marine Corps for the benefit of getting those positive kinds of habits, customs, and traditions that the Marine Corps instills in an individual. But in terms of coming into the Marine Corps, specifically with the idea or the purpose that I'm going to stay and make it a 20-year career, I think that competition is so keen--and there is still the factors for minorities--that I'm not sure I can encourage anybody to do that.

**O.     THEME XIV: BLACK OFFICERS ARE SKEPTICAL ABOUT THE "12-12-5" PLAN**

**1.     Theme**

This theme blends together a number of smaller themes to include recruitment, retention, and education on diversity. Many officers expressed doubt that the Marine Corps could achieve these very lofty accession goals, particularly with respect to the recruitment of Black officers.

**2.     Justification**

The goal of accessing 12 percent Black officers in the Marine Corps, although viewed with skepticism, was generally applauded by the officers interviewed. Most see the goal as "lofty" but still think of it as a step in the right direction. The enthusiasm for the current initiatives in pursuit of the 12 percent goal varied from extremely high levels to those that are very low. Virtually all interviewees provided their personal insights as to what the Marine Corps is doing right and what the Marine can do better in attempting to reach minority representation similar to that of the general population.

This section of excerpts illustrates typical thoughts regarding "12-12-5," conveyed by the officers interviewed. For example, a Captain (11) raised the following issue, and asked some very difficult questions:

I'd say first of all, be honest about what you're trying to do. Okay. In the things that I've seen, you're spending money, you're sending people out there but you -- but it's a band-aid. ...if you really, really want to know, why don't you talk to the universities, talk to corporate America who have programs to find the minority officers including Blacks. You can't fix the problem from inside because you can't see it. I mean face it, if you've been part of the problem 20 years and you commission a study composed of people who are in the institution that has a problem, let's be realistic about it. I personally



can't see them getting solutions. I believe that some of the things that they're doing--while it appears to be a step in the right direction, it's not -- it's not what they should be doing. And if you ask them why don't you use these people (people from outside the organization) and I've asked questions before, you get answers, but your question will never get answered. If you're not willing -- if you can relieve a Captain for not meeting his mission, if you can relieve a Major for not meeting his mission, why can't you relieve a Colonel or a General for not meeting their goals. A corporation, about five years ago wanted some senior Blacks in some of their positions. The director of personnel was told to do it. He had two years and he never did it. He was fired. And do you know why he was fired? Not because he didn't recruit the people, because just what I said, they're out there, you just didn't try. You didn't use the tools to your disposal. They got a new personnel director. They recruited the Blacks that they were looking for. And that's the whole point I'm making. Because, see, we're not willing to fire a General for something like that. We're not willing to fire a Colonel because in our institution, in the Marine Corps, it's not important. We're trying to meet the mandate that's been given to us by the Secretary of the Navy, not an objective that we have come to grips with on our own and have made a commitment to meeting that objective.

A Major (13), and former Recruiting Station Commanding Officer, discussed the structure of the recruiting system:

As a recruiting station commanding officer I was concerned about the officer recruitment, and I was actually involved with my OSOs. The realities are that recruiting is enlisted recruiting, not officer recruiting because from the officer's side of the house you can get your numbers, especially majority. I won't say easy, but it's not as difficult. So, the focus of effort or the priority of effort is on the enlisted recruiting. That said, you will not relieve an RSCO if they don't accomplish your officer mission. You will relieve him if he doesn't accomplish your enlisted mission. The reality is that your enlisted accessions is going to take priority, which it should because the numbers are so much higher.

A Second Lieutenant (02) provided this simple thought and solution that he thought everyone should hear about the culture of the Marine Corps:

Let go of the past. Meaning all that racism and bigotry and separate--separatism--that's in the past. Let's leave it there. Let's not keep carrying it like a doggone Pulitzer. If we can let that go and move on, I think the

Marine Corps will definitely reach that goal. But those of us--and I'm talking about everyone now--I'm talking about minorities and non-minorities. Well, if we let go of the past, if those senior leaders will let go of the past, if those folks who grew up in the back woods of Kentucky that--they'd never seen a Black officer until the Marine Corps started letting Black officers in and all of a sudden oh, okay, well, we're doing this affirmative action thing now, that's why this guy is here, or quota system, that's why this guy is here. If they let that doggone notion go, then I think we can move on as a corps.

A Lieutenant Colonel (06) related his feelings about "12-12-5" and public relations:

I think we have to develop a campaign plan that attacks it from a public relations standpoint, from the standpoint--and that is influencing families--major institutions, reach out to those segments of our population so that they are centers of influence on the young folks with talent and can tell them that being a military officer is an honorable, viable profession. So that's a kind of a public affairs, and that will help the recruiting effort and we have to invest in the media in terms of advertising to promote the talented college-educated minorities to come into the Marine Corps and that will help the officer selection, selection of officers in achieving the numbers that they're given, this 12, 12 and 5.

The following excerpts address more directly the subject of recruitment.

A Colonel (12) made the following observations:

I think the organization has been enlightened that we do need more minority role models out there, and women also. We started the bi-ethnic category recruiting goals in '89. We need to make sure though that the people who are implementing that, i.e., the OSOs, and the people that are supervising, that they don't sacrifice quality for quantity. My views in general, you know, basically the recruiting of minority officers is different, it's a challenge right now because we don't have many minority officers here. The organization shouldn't feel that it's lowering standards because we aren't lowering standards. It shouldn't feel that we're making special dispensation because we aren't doing that. We're just going out and attracting a whole bunch more people to our organization, that's all we're doing. Just attracting more people that look different because that's what we've got to do to make sure the organization survives.

A Major (10) discussed Black recruiting representatives:

I think Black minority OSOs and minorities in Black colleges helps a lot. I think that's where we probably make our most money with sending minority officers out to minority schools. Not that I don't think a Caucasian American Marine or OSO cannot get minority officers, I don't think they can get them in the numbers because seeing a minority helps for those who aren't sure. For those that are sure, it doesn't matter who recruits them. But for those who aren't sure, that helps persuade them.

A Colonel (04) talked about improvements in the Marine Corps:

I don't think that we've done a very good job at all of exposing ourselves to the minority community as such. I think that tangentially, we've paid lip service to it, we've touched on the outer fringes, but I don't believe that there has been a real concerted effort within the Marine Corps, a conscious decision made that we're going to go out and actively pursue the best and the brightest, the most talented folks that we can get. And quite candidly, I think that one of the things that we've missed the boat on is growing our own, that is, going to our enlisted grades and selecting those individuals that are most promising, those that have already cleared that first -- the bottom rung of the ladder. They've proven themselves as Marines to begin with. Now, we need to take that second step and we need to cultivate these individuals and bring them up through the various programs that we have, and I don't think we've done a very good job of that internally, let alone in the surrounding community in terms of minorities. I think also that we haven't utilized the minority officer corps, the cadre that we have, to go out in the community and to assist our OSOs in finding young qualified Black Americans. Sporadically, we've used those that have been high-profile. We've used the Colonel Boldens, we've used the Frank Petersons, we've used those that have really attained a high stature here and there, but in terms of actually going out and saying okay, we have "x" number of proven commodities within the Marine Corps, Black officers, let's put together a panel of Black officers, let's say, and let's find out from them how they believe we can most effectively recruit qualified minorities. Let's send them out as a team somewhere or teams around the country to the various Black institutions and to the various sources that we have available to us to look for individuals.

A Second Lieutenant (02), having attended a Historically Black College, drove the Colonel's (04) point home when he responded to the question, "Who has a bigger impact on recruitment?":

I would say the Black Marine OSO because the students they're looking like oh, my God, why are you in this thing, why are you -- why are you in slavery--and all that kind of stuff. And they would communicate with him more. When you've got a White Marine officer standing there, those kids aren't going to go up -- well, the majority of them, I won't say all of them, I'll say the majority of them aren't going to go up and say tell me about the Marine Corps. They're going to look at him and say oh, another blond-haired, blue-eyed devil on my campus and move on, that's -- I mean that's the mentality.

As alluded to in many of the excerpts, the interviewees point out that the solution to the "12-12-5" dilemma must begin from within the officer ranks of the Marine Corps. The following are thoughts illustrating the point.

A Captain (11) discussed the realism of the current approaches to diversity:

I guess I would have to say that while I believe in the commitment of our senior leadership, they're still not being open-minded in terms of you can't have every four-star and three-star general committed and not have your two-stars and one-stars and everybody else below them. I think that they kind of accepted the fact that if they're personally convicted towards whatever it is, that's good enough. And everybody below them will just automatically fall in line. That's not reality. I believe that we're still in denial. And while the Marine Corps is slow to change when it comes to the diversity, we're not realistic, and case in point, we created the command equal opportunity advisor. We made him an enlisted man. That's great. Who do the officers go to?

The same Captain(11) illustrated his point with this example:

The "60 Minutes" episode is a primary example. We've always been taught, always, from a leadership perspective, that perception can be a lot more damaging than reality. The issues on "60 Minutes" we denied it. Wait a minute. It wouldn't have been on there if it wasn't a perception. We didn't do a thing about the perception. Not one thing. However, we've been taught from a leadership perspective that we must act on perceptions, right? We didn't act on it. What does that tell you? We've got too many educated people in this institution to say well, we didn't realize it, we didn't understand. Well, the Commandant's responsible, he has a slew of people, legal people, manpower people that are supposed to be able to read between the lines and figure out on how to advise him. They didn't, because they couldn't. But I can. Down here in the trenches. We're going through the

motions. And we're still in denial. And we're going to be in denial for a long time and the unfortunate thing about that is that we're allowing, for whatever reason, our reputation as professionals to be tarnished by an issue that can be addressed. One of the things we stopped--it was clear that the Commandant meant everything he said and it came to a screeching halt--Tailhook. Everything came to a screeching halt, but mistreatment of Blacks and minorities, it will go away. Wait it out.

A Major (10) pointed out that the Commandant has put the "12-12-5" issue in the hands of every Marine:

...how do we keep good officers, good minority officers, and when we briefed the whole thing to the Commandant, you know, it kind of sent chills down my arm because he actually said, you know, if you know of something that will help to keep minority officers in, if you know of something that will help grow our own and help minority enlisted Marines become officers, he said do it, he said it's in your hands, do it. He was talking to everybody in there, White, Black, we had Sergeants, all the way through Brigadier General in that conference.

A Captain (05) stated that bridging the racial gap starts from the senior leadership and continues down to every Marine, involving selflessness:

They (senior leadership) need to just sit down and have a symposium and they can invite anybody they want, White, Black, it doesn't make a difference, and sit down and just pull the shirts off and talk about minority relations in the Marine Corps, perceptions and myths, whatever, and then things like the almanac that they throw out. And also there's an equal opportunity survey that's put out by the Marine Corps annually that talks about sexual harassment, racial harassment, shows the breakdown by grade, shows you what MOSs are under-represented or over-representative. They need to just lay all that information out on the table, let people know what's available, and let people talk and throw out some ideas. The only way you're going to change the system is from the inside. That's the only way it's going to be done, and a lot of Marines today--a lot of people in general today--everybody's me, me and me. They don't want to do anything unless it's nice, easy, and comfortable for themselves.

The same Captain (05) also goes on to say that the Marine Corps can learn from what the other Services are doing to promote awareness of the minority contributions:

If you look at the other branches in the service, depending on what branch of the service, they have some historical lineage for minorities, like the Air Force, they have the Army Air Corps and the Tuskegee Air Corps. They make a conscious effort to show the lineage there, to show the connection, to show the opportunities that they've given minorities in the service. The Army has buffalo soldiers, I can't think of the Army unit they had in Europe during World War II, but they have a long history of minority participation in the organization. But the Marine Corps makes a conscious effort to say, 'hey, we're all one Marine Corps, we don't want to highlight anything'. I know in the Navy side of the house, whenever they have minorities working flag rank, or they do historical one-of-a-kind things like command of a nuclear submarine, they make a big point of putting them out on the recruiting circuit and also going around doing workshops and seminars so you say, 'hey, here's an individual that's made it'. They (the Marines) need to actively promote or put forward information on African Americans in the military.

In the discussion of retention, many issues surfaced. The issues ranged from education, lack of feedback, changing one's identity, to the need for mentoring. The following section touches on all of the above issues.

A Major (01) addressed education:

I think it's a matter of education. I think recruiting duty, getting out there to those colleges where you've got these guys in their senior year of college getting ready to make a decision, or even their junior year, and just tell them, 'hey, here's what the Marine Corps is all about', it's a matter of education. But taking minority officers that (even have captains or even majors) that have been out and been successful in the Marine Corps, having them go to speak at these universities and talk to these minority students, I think that's a key thing right there.

A First Lieutenant (09) spoke about fostering the mind set that cultural differences are okay:

Until people can realize there's some type of importance to let people have some cultural difference or diversity, I think it's just going to keep slamming back on the poor individuals who decided okay, well, I'm going to be me and then their counterparts or their peers or even their subordinates will lose respect for them and consider them to be substandard in their occupation.

A Lieutenant Colonel (07) discussed the importance of getting timely feedback from superiors regarding performance:

If he (reviewing officer) had a problem with my performance, then I should have been told. But here was somebody who was smiling at me all the time, and I had no idea he was less than satisfied. Yet, he never said a word. That report was November, I didn't find out until April when I had to go around the way to find out what was on that microfiche so that I could see the back of the report. And then it wasn't until I could track him down six weeks later to ask him, 'well, sir, what was the problem?'

A Major (01) also expounded on the above point:

The CO that really didn't want to come right out and actually tell me why they were rating me a certain way, which really doesn't afford me the opportunity to improve myself especially if they don't tell me where my weaknesses are. I believe that if any command officer can't tell me what my weaknesses are, then he's not doing an accurate assessment of my capabilities or even my weaknesses.

A Captain (03) felt that part of his duty as a Black Marine officer is to be part of the education process. He said:

Me, as a minority officer, I need to educate those Colonels I work for, those Captains I work with, and those Lieutenants or Sergeants and staff NCOs that work for me. And I think if we talk about it, the climate may continue to change and it will always be that particular type of vigil. You can't just say well, affirmative action, we've got 12, 12 and 5, we can forget about it now, or equal opportunity, we have 12, 12 and 5, we can forget about equal opportunity.

A First Lieutenant (09) related a story in which she was told to lose her identity as an individual, as a minority:

I've actually had officers walk up to me and tell me that I need to be more like them, you know, and I'm like what. Well, you don't act like us. You don't look like us. You wear your hair in braids, and I had braids at one time and I caught a lot of flack and that, you know, different things like that and I'm just like I'm not doing anything against regulations. Well, it doesn't matter because part of being a Marine is assimilating into the group. And

when you do things to make yourself stand out, you're not being a good Marine. And this person I deal with on a regular basis, he has a big problem with me because he doesn't feel I'm like him, which translates into what every Marine should be.

A Second Lieutenant (02) spoke of not being thought of as a team player because he did not chose to put his cultural heritage on the "back burner" while at The Basic School:

I didn't try to change the way I act, change the music that I listen to, or change the places that I like to go to in order to feel a part of the team, because heck, being a doggone Marine, you can be yourself and still be a Marine. And I think that they actually wanted me to lose my identity to feel like okay, well, now I'm being a team player.

A Captain (05) spoke out about the "one shade of green" mentality of the Marine Corps that keeps the organization from taking a bold step toward diversity:

...it's hard for other people to empathize, everybody wants to say, 'hey, you're green, you're camouflage, it's all one big Marine Corps.' They're not willing to take the time to say well, 'hey, here's an individual that might be a little bit more culturally diverse, that might have a different slant on how things are done, or how things are going, or whatever.' And when you say that to somebody, when you go against the norm, the Marine Corps is a pyramid, there's a point at the top and then everything flows down from it like any military organization. And they are not looking for changes. They are looking for somebody to fit into the pattern. They are not looking for somebody that's a little bit outside of the lines or whatever. And I'm not talking radical, let's wear an earring and a bandanna. I'm talking about somebody that might have a different viewpoint or a different way of doing things, or a different kind of music they like, or a different kind of cultural event. I don't think the Marine Corps has accepted that. The Marine Corps has a standard and it wants everybody to adhere to its standard.

The final section in this theme addresses the issue of mentoring. At least half of the interviewees specifically mentioned mentoring, though no questions specifically referring to the issue were asked. A Major (01) addressed the issue, stating that, if he had a mentor,



perhaps he would not have resigned his commission after a racial incident in his first command:

I felt there was no one I could turn to for advice. I was a young Marine then. I didn't know, I was afraid that if I do go to someone and then desire to put in an augmentation later, that I wouldn't have any chances at all, so I ended up, I told my wife we're just going to, I'll get out of the Marine Corps.

A Captain (14) offered this advice:

I think commands, especially those that have a lot of Black officers at the top up there, they need to have a mentoring program for officers just getting to their command because they don't know the military when they get there. When you have an officer corps like that I think that they need to have those kind of people as role model mentors to explain to them about what's expected of them as Black Marine officers.

A Captain (05) shed some light on the subject of mentoring:

...right now in the little back corners, in barrooms, or whatever, mentoring is going on between senior and junior officers. It may not be structured. There may not be a rule book somewhere out there, but mentoring is going on and we know this, we know the Citadel grads are working with the Citadel grads, the 0302s are looking out for the 0302s. They need to stop paying lip service to this mentoring program. They need to develop a structured mentoring program from TBS on, where somebody sits down and talks to you, and the reason why I say that is because you and I both know as a Black Second Lieutenant if a Black Captain, a Naval Academy grad, had of walked up to us and said, 'hey, come here a minute, let's drink a beer, let's talk about a couple of things.' If he took the time to tell you that, and he took the time to be open with you and say some things to you, I guarantee you that you would have thought for a couple of seconds, at least a couple of seconds afterwards to say, 'hm, he took the time or she took the time to come over here and say something to me, obviously they felt that it was important.'

The interviewees who mentioned mentoring also pointed out the need for mentors to take the initiative and make first contact with the new minority officer. After all, the new Marine is not aware of the possible pitfalls that may or may not be waiting.

**P.     THEME XV: SOME BLACK OFFICERS SAY THAT ASSIGNMENT TO A CRITICAL BILLET INVOLVES CAREER RISK**

**1.     Theme**

Acceptance of a critical billet, such as acquisition, may put the minority officer in a higher career risk category than would otherwise be the case.

**2.     Justification**

The information collected in this area was sparse, and so no real conclusion could be drawn. Three of the interviewees responded to this question of which one had actual acquisition experience. The justification for this theme lies in the following excerpts.

A Captain (11) felt that this area was no different from any other high visibility position, that is, that minorities are few and far between:

I am currently filling an acquisition billet. It's an acquisition candidate billet. It's like anything else, those billets that are high-paced, fast moving, clip potential, no you don't see us there. You just don't see us there. Again, I'm the only African American on this entire staff. So no, we're not there.

A Lieutenant Colonel (06) clearly stated that there are big risks in accepting critical billets outside of one's primary occupational speciality; however, great rewards also go to the great risk takers:

The Marine Corps needs acquisition guys, and you reach up and you grab that because you think hey, I can succeed at that path, and it's getting kind of gummed up in the infantry, it's really getting really competitive. There's a degree of risk because I think performance is going to be the ultimate thing. If you switch and you don't have the background to make that switch, the education or the experience to get into acquisition to be successful and be competitive, then you may hurt yourself because you're leaving behind all this background that you built up in some other MOS. So you have to reestablish your credibility. It hurts a little bit, but you have to understand there's a weakness when you leave your MOS, you may be falling behind in terms of what's happening in your MOS. It is up to you, a lot of the burden

is up to you to get back up to speed. Okay. So, a little bit of a challenge to get back up to speed, but you can do it, but you're right, it puts -- you're at risk. Now you've spent four years, three years in the acquisition business, and you try to come back to the 03s and you'd better had done well in the acquisition tour.

A Captain (03) provided this insight regarding to critical billets:

Yes, I would say that does stand a good possibility of actually hurting you. Number one, it takes you out of the typical career path that keeps you technically and tactically proficient at your combat skills as far as either doing combat operations or supporting combat operations. So while you're off filling your billet, your counterparts are getting the experience and learning new and better ways of making a better mousetrap or supporting a better mousetrap, so to speak, as far as combat operations. So that definitely could hurt you when you get thrown back in there, or you get compared against them for promotions and now they've been out on the fringes doing the joint, combined operational exercises and you haven't, and you're not as proficient. So yes, you can quickly end up being somewhat detrimental to yourself even in light of your successes in recruiting or training at training commands.

#### **Q. COMPARISON OF MARINE CORPS AND NAVY DATA**

Fifteen themes were developed from Marine officer interviews, and thirteen were developed from Navy officers by Jones and Stigler. The themes developed from the interviews conducted with Black Marine officers proved to be very similar to those developed by Jones and Stigler from interviews with Black Navy officers (Appendix F). This suggests that certain generalizations can be made about minority perceptions and attitudes, particularly those of Blacks, regardless of service or officer community/MOS. The Black officers interviewed, regardless of service (Navy or Marine Corps), conveyed the following similarities and differences.

## **1. Similarities**

Twelve Marine officer themes virtually matched eleven of the Navy officer themes. Marine officer themes IV and V were encompassed in Navy officer theme X. Most officers in both studies were from a two-parent household. In many of the two-parent households (66 percent), both the mother and father were employed outside the home. Also, a large majority of the officers interviewed indicated that there was some type of military influence in their lives at an early age. Another similarity noted between Navy and Marine officers were the reason or objectives for joining the service: employment, pursuit of an education, and job opportunities.

Other very pronounced similarities were that most Black officers have experienced discrimination at some time during their time in the Service. This discrimination could have come in the form of not receiving a reward or the respect due, or from the perception that Black officers have to work harder to gain the same recognition as their non-minority counterparts. However, despite the above experiences, discrimination did not appear as a dominant theme in overall career experiences and most officers do plan to someday retire from the Service.

Another consistency or common theme between the two Services was that the majority of the officers interviewed feel most rewarded when trusted to perform and when leading subordinates. Additionally, most officers feel that downsizing has little impact on them personally, other than to heighten competitiveness, and they are skeptical about the "12-12-5" plan initiated by DoN. The last of the numerous similarities was that most Black

officers believe that they must become adept at socializing in majority environments to be successful.

## **2. Differences**

The first and most prominent difference noted was that although the vast majority of the Navy and Marine officers interviewed recruited themselves into the Service, a Marine recruiting representative played a vital role in making the decision to join the Marine Corps. This in not to say that advertising and other public affairs ventures did not play a role in convincing the individual to join the Service.

The second dissimilarity noted in the data was that the Marine officers interviewed expressed a definite desire not to be treated differently from any other Marine officer. The desire was in fact to be treated exactly the same, neither better nor worse then majority officers.

The last notable difference in the data included the theme developed with regard to critical billets, such as in acquisition, and the risk that accompanies selection to such a billet.

In this chapter, fifteen themes were developed that encompassed the feelings and perceptions conveyed by Black officers in the Marine Corps with respect to recruitment, retention, and diversity in general. The Marine themes were then compared and contrasted with those developed by Jones and Stigler [Ref. 7] for Navy officers. The intention was not to focus on the negative issues or to cry foul play, but instead to point out areas in which improvements can be made to attract more minority officers and to encourage the retention of minorities currently serving. The next chapter considers the common themes among

Black Naval officers, draws conclusions, and offers recommendations with respect to recruitment, retention and diversity in general.



## V. RESULTS

### A. OVERVIEW

The themes developed in Chapter IV provide insight to the issues that Black Marine officers perceive as important. Using themes that were prevalent in both the Navy and Marine Corps as a basis for survey questions can yield the data needed to gain new insights on minority issues within the DoN. The survey questions identified here should be tested, paired with appropriate scales where necessary, and implemented in a formal survey of Navy and Marine minority officers. The survey data would then provide the information needed to begin making the required changes in the DoN recruiting structure and philosophy to reach the "12-12-5" accession goals.

### B. POTENTIAL SURVEY QUESTIONS FOR MINORITY USMC AND USN OFFICERS

The following list of potential survey questions were developed using themes derived from the data as the basis for construction.

#### Joining the Marine Corps/Navy

What source do you think created your initial interest in joining the military?

At what age did you first consider joining the military?

At what age did you first consider joining the Marines/Navy?

What source influenced your final decision to join the Marine Corps or the Navy?

If your final decision to join the Marine Corps/Navy was influenced by a recruiter, check the answers that apply to your recruiter:

The recruiter's race was Black\_\_\_\_ White\_\_\_\_ Hispanic\_\_\_\_ Other\_\_\_\_

The recruiter was male\_\_\_\_ female\_\_\_\_

I met the recruiter because:

The recruiter influenced me by :

If the recruiter contacted you, describe the circumstances under which this occurred:



Did you ever consider joining another branch of the service? If yes, what made you decide on the Marine Corps/Navy?

What were your alternatives to joining the Marine Corps/Navy?

continuing my education \_\_\_\_\_

taking a civilian job \_\_\_\_\_

there were no better offers \_\_\_\_\_

Describe the extent to which each of the following reasons ultimately influenced your final decision to join:

personal development

career development

service to country (patriotism)

pay

benefits

image of my service; identity with image

to keep in good physical condition

challenges

camaraderie

travel

the nature of the work

develop leadership qualities

leadership opportunities

gain self-discipline

education

variety of work

doing something that matters

job security

#### Experiences at Accession Source

Describe the approximate percentage of minorities at your accession source: \_\_\_\_\_

Describe the approximate percentages of men \_\_\_\_\_ and women \_\_\_\_\_ at your accession source.

Was your unit leader Black \_\_\_\_\_ White \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_?

Was your leader male \_\_\_\_\_ or female \_\_\_\_\_?

Did you ever experience racism directed toward you or observe racism directed toward others in your unit?

If yes, about how many incidents were there? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you think these incidents were deliberate \_\_\_\_\_ or unintentional \_\_\_\_\_?

Briefly describe the incident(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Describe what you consider to be the cause(s) of these incidents: \_\_\_\_\_

If no, was there any particular factor that you could say accounted for the lack of racism in your workunit? \_\_\_\_\_

Did you ever experience sexism directed toward you or observe sexism directed toward others in your unit?

If yes, about how many incidents were there? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you think these incidents were deliberate \_\_\_\_\_ or unintentional \_\_\_\_\_?

Briefly describe the incident(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Describe what you consider to be the cause(s) of these incidents: \_\_\_\_\_

If no, was there any particular factor that you could say accounted for the lack of sexism in your work unit? \_\_\_\_\_

Describe any problems other than racism or sexism that affected your experience at your accession source: \_\_\_\_\_

Overall, how would you describe your experience at your accession source with respect to your race?

\_\_\_\_\_ Racial incident(s) made me reconsider my desire to enter the Marine Corps/Navy.

\_\_\_\_\_ Racial incident(s) were somewhat of a problem but not serious enough to make me doubt my decision to join the military.

\_\_\_\_\_ Racial incident(s) were not a major issue in the context of an overall, positive experience.

\_\_\_\_\_ I did not experience or observe any racial incidents.

Overall, how would you describe your experience at your accession source with respect to your gender?

\_\_\_\_\_ Gender related incident(s) made me reconsider my desire to enter the Marine Corps/Navy.

\_\_\_\_\_ Gender related incident(s) were somewhat of a problem but not serious enough to make me doubt my decision to join the military.

\_\_\_\_\_ Gender related incident(s) were not a major issue in the context of an overall, positive experience.

\_\_\_\_\_ I did not experience or observe any racial incidents.

Experiences at TBS/Initial Qualification School (SWOS, Supply, etc)

Describe the approximate percentage of minorities in your unit: \_\_\_\_\_  
Describe the approximate percentages of men \_\_\_\_\_ and women \_\_\_\_\_ in your unit.  
Was your unit leader Black \_\_\_\_\_ White \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_?  
Was your unit leader male \_\_\_\_\_ or female \_\_\_\_\_?

Did you ever experience racism directed toward you or observe racism directed toward others in your unit?

If yes, about how many incidents were there? \_\_\_\_\_  
Do you think these incidents were deliberate \_\_\_\_\_ or unintentional \_\_\_\_\_?  
Briefly describe the incident(s): \_\_\_\_\_  
Describe what you consider to be the cause(s) of these incidents: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

If no, was there any particular factor that you could say accounted for the lack of racism in your work unit?

Did you ever experience sexism directed toward you or observe sexism directed toward others in your unit?

If yes, about how many incidents were there? \_\_\_\_\_  
Do you think these incidents were deliberate \_\_\_\_\_ or unintentional \_\_\_\_\_?  
Briefly describe the incident(s): \_\_\_\_\_  
Describe what you consider to be the cause(s) of these incidents: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

If no, was there any particular factor that you could say accounted for the lack of sexism in your work unit?

Describe any problems other than racism or sexism that affected your experience at TBS/Initial Qualification School (SWOS, SUPPLY, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

Overall, how would you describe your experience at TBS/Initial Qualification School (SWOS, SUPPLY, etc.) with respect to your race? \_\_\_\_\_

Overall, how would you describe your experience at TBS/Initial Qualification School (SWOS, SUPPLY, etc.) with respect to your gender? \_\_\_\_\_

Experiences at Your First Command

Describe the approximate percentage of minorities in your first command: \_\_\_\_\_  
Describe approximate percentages of men \_\_\_\_\_ and women \_\_\_\_\_ at your first command.

Was your unit commander black \_\_\_\_ White \_\_\_\_ other \_\_\_\_ ?  
Was your unit commander male \_\_\_\_ or female \_\_\_\_ ?

Did you ever experience racism directed toward you or observe racism directed toward others in your unit?

If yes, about how many incidents were there? \_\_\_\_

Briefly describe the incident(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Do you think these incidents were deliberate \_\_\_\_ or unintentional \_\_\_\_ ?

Describe what you consider to be the cause(s) of these incidents: \_\_\_\_\_

If no, was there any particular factor that you could say accounted for the lack of racism in your work unit?

Did you ever experience sexism directed toward you or observe sexism directed toward others in your unit?

If yes, about how many incidents were there? \_\_\_\_

Briefly describe the incident(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Do you think these incidents were deliberate \_\_\_\_ or unintentional \_\_\_\_ ?

Describe what you consider to be the cause(s) of these incidents: \_\_\_\_\_

If no, was there any particular factor that you could say accounted for the lack of sexism in your work unit?

Describe any problems other than racism or sexism that affected your experience at your first command: \_\_\_\_\_

Overall, how would you describe your experience at your first command with respect to your race? \_\_\_\_\_

Overall, how would you describe your experience at your first command with respect to your gender? \_\_\_\_\_

Generally describe any racial and/or gender issues you have experienced since your first command. \_\_\_\_\_

### Reasons for Staying in or Leaving the Service

To what extent do the following factors influence you to stay in the Service?

- personal development
- career development
- service to country (patriotism)
- Pay
- benefits
- image of my service; identity with that image
- to keep in good physical condition
- challenges
- camaraderie
- travel
- the nature of the work
- develop leadership qualities
- experience leadership opportunities
- work for good leaders
- gain self-discipline
- education/training opportunities
- variety of work
- nature of the work
- job assignments
- doing something that matters
- job security
- respect gained from work done
- mentoring opportunities
- recognition/awards
- trust to get the job done

To what extent do the following factors influence (or could they influence) your decision to leave the Service?

- lack of leader support
- time away from home
- lack of spouse support
- lack of equal opportunity due to racial discrimination
- lack of equal opportunity due to gender discrimination
- not being treated with respect
- not being treated fairly
- poor leadership in my immediate chain of command
- poor leadership at the higher levels
- poor advancement opportunities
- pay
- benefits

education/training opportunities  
job assignments  
the nature of the work  
variety of the work  
lack of respect  
lack of recognition/awards  
downsizing impact on job security

Characterize how much you agree or disagree with the following statements:

promotions are fair and equitable across the board  
promotions are unfair; they are based on who you know  
promotions are unfair; they are more likely to go to a White than a Black officer  
evaluations are fair and equitable across the board  
evaluations are unfair; they are influenced by friendships  
evaluations are unfair; White officers give better evaluations to White officers than to Blacks  
evaluations are influenced by an officer's ability to socialize with the right people at the right places  
Black officers have to work harder than White officers to get the same evaluation  
recognition/awards are fair and equitable across the board  
recognition/awards are unfair; they are influenced by friendships  
recognition/awards are unfair; White officers are more likely to be recognized than Black officers  
recognition/awards are influenced by an officer's ability to socialize with the right people at the right places  
Black officers have to work harder than White officers to get the same recognition  
I am comfortable socializing in a predominately Black social environment  
I am comfortable socializing in a predominately White social environment  
I am comfortable socializing in a predominately White social environment but prefer not to do so  
Social acceptance is easier for White than Black officers in a predominately White environment  
Overall, minorities do not receive the same respect provided to White officers by virtue of rank and experience level  
Overall, I have worked for leaders who are more concerned with results than race  
It would be very helpful to have formal mentors to clarify expectations of new officers  
The Marine Corps/Navy has made progress recently in eliminating discriminatory practices

Which of the following best describes your assessment of the state of equal opportunity in your Service?

We have achieved equal opportunity for everyone

We Don't have 100 percent equal opportunity, but we have achieved it for most of the people, most of the time

We are about half way there to achieving equal opportunity

We have a very long way to go to achieve equal opportunity

There is no equal opportunity in my Service

Do you hope to retire from the Marine Corps/Navy?

yes \_\_\_ no \_\_\_ undecided \_\_\_

Would you recommend one or two tours in your Service to a young Black man or woman?

yes \_\_\_ no \_\_\_ it would depend on the person \_\_\_

Would you recommend a career in your service to a young Black man or woman?

yes \_\_\_ no \_\_\_ it would depend on the person \_\_\_

Do you think that the senior leadership in your service is committed to reaching the "12-12-5" accession goals?

yes \_\_\_ no \_\_\_

In order to achieve the "12-12-5" plan for minorities, we need: (check all that apply)

\_\_\_ a recruiting system that places more emphasis on officers

\_\_\_ more Black recruiters

\_\_\_ more hometown recruiting

\_\_\_ more advertising

\_\_\_ improvement in racial relations within the service

\_\_\_ improvement in equal opportunity within the service

\_\_\_ more education in managing diversity

\_\_\_ other \_\_\_\_\_

Do you think that the Services will reach the "12-12-5" goals? \_\_\_

If no, briefly explain why: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

The officer recruiting system is not set up properly to facilitate reaching the "12-12-5" minority officer accession goals

Recruiting personnel should be held accountable for officer accessions just as they are for the enlisted mission

All minority officers should spend at least two weeks each year assisting recruiting personnel in officer procurement  
 There is a need for a structured mentoring program in which minority senior officers are paired with minority junior officers  
 A structured mentoring program for minority officers constitutes preferential treatment  
 There is no need to continue AA/EO programs if diversity management will be taking place

Given the opportunity to fill a critical billet (e.g. acquisition, recruiting, etc.) would you accept it?

If yes, which of the following is a factor:

- ☐ filling a critical billet increases longevity in the service
- ☐ filling a critical billet increases promotability to the next rank
- ☐ filling a critical billet enhances proficiency skills for civilian employment
- ☐ filling the billet will put you in the spot light there by creating opportunities for other minorities to follow
- ☐ other \_\_\_\_\_

If no, which of the following is a factor:

- ☐ filling a critical billet outside your regular duties puts a career at risk
- ☐ loss of proficiency in skills associated with performing regular duties
- ☐ lack of expertise in the critical position
- ☐ lack of minority presence in the critical field
- ☐ other \_\_\_\_\_

**Background:** These questions relate to you and your family.

How would you describe your family's socioeconomic status when growing up?  
 When you joined the military, were both your father and mother living at home?  
 Did your father and/or mother serve in the military?  
 Did either your mother or father serve in the Navy?  
 Did either your mother or father serve in the Marine Corps?  
 If your father did serve in the military, was (is) he in the military for a full career (20 years or more)?  
 Did you have any other relatives who were in the military?  
 How many brothers and sisters did you have in your family when you were growing up?  
 Would you describe yourself, in general terms, as politically liberal, moderate, or conservative?  
 What is your race or ethnic origin?  
 What is your gender?  
 What is your current pay grade?  
 What is the highest level of education that you have completed?



The information collected on this survey could be merged with computerized data in personnel files to identify additional group characteristics such as officer community or occupational area, assignment history, geographic origin, and other important items for research that are too detailed to include here.

## **VI. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **A. CONCLUSIONS**

The United States Marine Corps has fallen victim to the affirmative action cycle of crisis, as described by R. Roosevelt Thomas, Jr., in the past. The cycle began with the recognition of racial under representation and equality issues. Then, in an effort to solve the racial equality and under representation problems, the DoN stepped in and increased recruitment efforts to bring in qualified individuals. The term qualified translated to those who were most likely to mesh with the DoN's current culture. Following the recruitment periods expectations ran high. However, hiring the "right" individuals did not solve the original problem of discriminatory behavior and attitudes and the newly recruited minority service members did not progress as expected. White Males complained about preferential treatment and reverse discrimination. Minorities and women were aware of the stigma of affirmative action activities. Everyone was unsatisfied or unhappy and the original problem has not been solved. Additionally, the DoN was not looked on as having given a good faith effort.

Current equal employment (EO) concerns include creating and maintaining an organizational climate where all minorities believe they can succeed, recruitment of quality minority officers and retention of minority officers as they progress into the senior ranks. These are basically the same concerns that have existed in the 1940's when the Marine Corps first started to allow Blacks into its ranks.

To summarize progress: DoD has determined that racial harmony is necessary to maintain morale and fighting effectiveness. However, the office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Affirmative Action closed after 1986 and the Armed Services have come under increasing pressure to offer more opportunities to minorities in the officer corps and ensure complete fairness in all aspects of career progression. Therefore, the office of the Assistant Secretary for Affirmative Action was reestablished in 1995. Next, the "Campaign Plan to Increase Diversity within the Officer Corps of the Marine Corps" was signed by the Commandant of the Marine Corps later in 1995. Additionally, the Secretary of Defense has recently ordered all senior military and civilian officials in DoD to attend a two a day EO training seminar. Further, the Secretary of the Navy has announced a plan to increase minority officer accessions (and eventually, the full inventory of officers) to include 12 percent Blacks, 12 percent Hispanics, and 5 percent Asian/Pacific Islanders and Native Americans/Alaskan Natives by the year 2000.

Has the DoN set itself up for disappointment and renewed crisis in the future, as the AA cycle predicts? To meet the challenge of the future, an understanding of the present minority officer procurement effort, as well as the internal and external factors that affect this effort, is essential. The main internal and external factors are the views and feelings of the minorities officers or potential officers. The fifteen themes listed below capture the thoughts and perspectives of a small number of Black Marine officers. These themes are almost identical to those developed by Jones and Stigler (Appendix F) in a similar study of Navy officers.

- THEME I: MOST BLACK OFFICERS CAME FROM A TWO-PARENT HOUSEHOLD
- THEME II: BLACK OFFICERS WERE EXPOSED TO THE MILITARY AT A YOUNG AGE
- THEME III: DECISIONS TO JOIN THE MILITARY WERE TYPICALLY MADE AT AN EARLY AGE, INDEPENDENT OF A RECRUITER'S INFLUENCE. HOWEVER, RECRUITERS WERE INSTRUMENTAL IN DECISIONS TO JOIN THE MARINE CORPS.
- THEME IV: THE MAIN OBJECTIVES OF BLACK OFFICERS IN JOINING THE MARINE CORPS WERE EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION, AND SPECIFIC JOB OPPORTUNITIES
- THEME V: ALL INTERVIEWEES EXPERIENCED SOME SORT OF DISCRIMINATION IN THE MARINE CORPS
- THEME VI: DISCRIMINATION TENDS TO BE ISOLATED AND IS NOT A DOMINANT ELEMENT IN OVERALL CAREER EXPERIENCES OF BLACK OFFICERS
- THEME VII: MOST BLACK MARINE OFFICERS BELIEVE THAT THEY HAVE TO DO MORE THAN THEIR WHITE COUNTERPARTS TO GAIN THE SAME RECOGNITION
- THEME VIII: THERE IS A PREVALENT VIEW THAT BLACK OFFICERS MUST BECOME ADEPT AT SOCIALIZING IN MAJORITY ENVIRONMENTS TO BE SUCCESSFUL
- THEME IX: BLACK OFFICERS DO NOT WANT TO BE TREATED DIFFERENTLY-- NEITHER BETTER NOR WORSE THAN WHITES
- THEME X: BLACK OFFICERS BELIEVE THAT THEY HAVE BEEN SLIGHTED IN TERMS OF RESPECT AND REWARDS
- THEME XI: A VAST MAJORITY OF BLACK OFFICERS FEEL MOST REWARDED WHEN TRUSTED TO PERFORM AND WHEN PROVIDING LEADERSHIP TO SUBORDINATES
- THEME XII: MOST BLACK OFFICERS PLAN TO RETIRE FROM THE MARINE CORPS

THEME XIII: BLACK OFFICERS BELIEVE THAT THE DEFENSE DOWNSIZING HAS HEIGHTENED COMPETITIVENESS FOR PROMOTION

THEME XIV: BLACK OFFICERS ARE SKEPTICAL ABOUT THE "12-12-5" PLAN

THEME XV: SOME BLACK OFFICERS SAY THAT ASSIGNMENT TO A CRITICAL BILLET INVOLVES CAREER RISK

Development of the themes is an essential milestone in route to meeting the "12-12-5" objective. Clearly a deeper understanding of the thoughts and perspectives of minority officers themselves is the essential starting point to finding the answers that have eluded DoN with respect to diversity. The themes address several important questions and help to provide much-needed insights to the organization. The themes answer questions such as:

- Why was the Navy/Marine Corps chosen over other Services or a civilian career?
- What is the magnitude of the minority recruitment and retention problem in the Sea Services?
- How has the Marine Corps' policy on career development influenced minority officers to select careers paths that lead to placement in critical billets (such as acquisition)?
- What are the specific factors influencing minority officers to join or stay in the Navy or Marine Corps?

The themes also facilitate development of survey questions that provide the data needed to begin making the required changes in DoN recruiting structure and philosophy to reach the "12-12-5" accession goals, and in understanding the dynamics that influence minority officers to remain in the Navy or Marine Corps until eligible for retirement.

## **B. RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **1. Pre-test Potential Survey Questions**

Pre-testing is a key step in the developmental process of a survey. The potential survey questions presented in this thesis should be pre-tested to insure the alternative

responses represent a full spectrum of potential replies. Questions may be re-worded so that they are more closely understood.

Additionally, pre-testing builds flexibility into a survey, allowing for responses from a wide range of minorities. The scope was limited to Black Marine officers. Pre-testing with all minorities enables the DoN to tailor the survey to suit the needs of the entire organization and to focus the questions on all minority issues not just those of Black officers.

Lastly, pretesting the survey serves to validate the interview data. By first quantifying agreement with themes, DoN is sure to produce a quality survey that examines the core issues with respect to all minorities.

## **2. Establish a Panel of Minority Officers to Conduct Diagnostic Research**

DoN should establish a panel of minority officers to conduct diagnostic research. The panel should be charged with monitoring, analyzing, and evaluating the current programs and initiatives in place to reach the diversity goals of the Navy and Marine Corps.

Cultural change is a long and slow and often complicated process that takes years to achieve. The panel of minority officers should also be charged with the responsibility of disseminating the data collected during research. By periodically traveling to DoN installations and conducting symposiums on diversity issues, the education process can continue to advance and, in time, become a part of the same tradition upon which the sea Services were founded.

## **3. Establish and Institute a Minority Officer Mentoring Program**

Until supportive traditions have been firmly rooted into DoN culture, there is a need for a structured mentoring program among minority officers. During the interviews

conducted for this research project, virtually all of the minority officers indicated a need for such a mentoring program.

As theme V states, all interviewees have experienced discrimination. A structured mentoring program offers the minority officer the benefit of someone else's experiences. Additionally, such a program tenders the minority officer an opportunity to become aware of the realities that exist with DoN and to perhaps become knowledgeable of the perceptions held by majority officers concerning diversity. Additionally, having a mentor gives the minority officer someone to turn to with questions or for advice on race-related issues. The minority officer can also use the mentor as a sounding board for any ideas or plans with regard to dealing with majority officers.

Seemingly, any officer, minority or majority has the potential to be a mentor for minority officers. However, this is not the case. A majority officer would probably have different life experiences than those of the minority, and this might limit his or her understanding of the feelings, concerns, and problems of the minority officer.

#### **4. Solve the Diversity Issue From Within**

The DoN must realize that the diversity issue must be solved from within. Until the military's senior leadership realizes that it must not only "talk the talk" but also "walk the walk", the issue will never be fully resolved. The senior leadership in DoN is as much the problem as they are the solution.

A common perception among the interviewees is that DoN is only paying lip service to the diversity issue. If recruiters fail to make their enlisted mission, they can be, and often times are, relieved of their duties. It is common knowledge that if DoN wants closure on

an important issue, and results are not forthcoming, those responsible for the results get relieved. Until the senior leadership in DoN starts holding senior military leadership accountable for their actions or inactions concerning diversity, the inconsistencies and problems will continue to exist.

Another contributing factor to the above perception is a lack of education with respect to diversity management. What is not common knowledge are the differences between managing diversity and AA/EO. Senior military leaders need to know and embrace the fact that diversity management is a "proactive" process and that senior leadership plays a crucial role. Without a commitment from the top, diversity issues will continue to plague both the Navy and the Marine Corps.

### **C. POTENTIAL AREAS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

Due to the emphasis on Black officers and relatively small sample, one should not use the results of this study predict and generalize for all minority officers. Additionally, the female Marine officers interviewed in this study conveyed very different thoughts and perceptions regarding the most significant characteristic (gender as opposed to race/ethnicity) that affected their career and career decisions. The following are potential areas for further research.

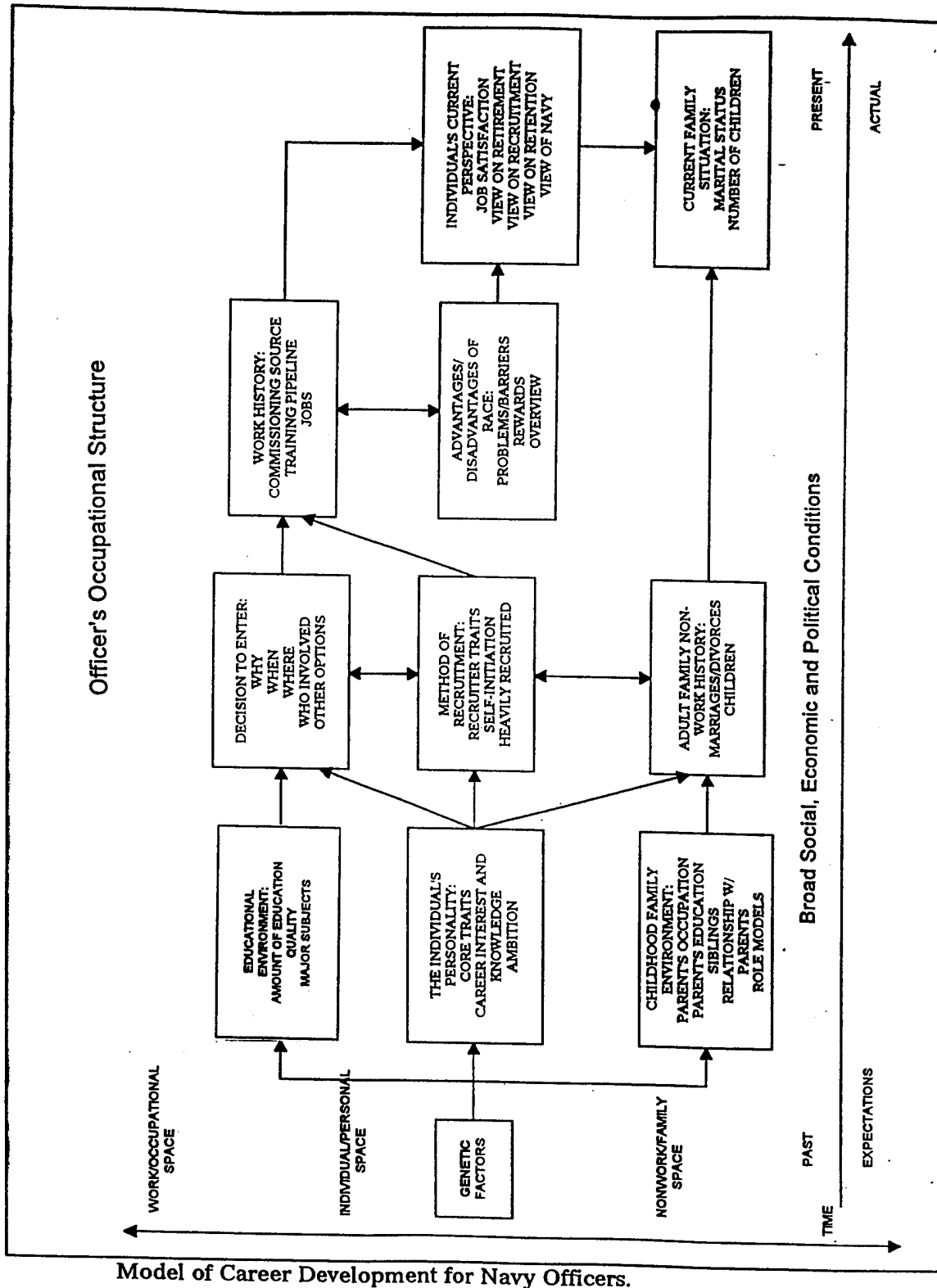
- Research on diversity issues that focus on minority groups other than Blacks. To truly collect the thoughts and perceptions of minorities as a group, focused interviews should be conducted with other minority groups to develop potential survey questions that cover the important issues as seen through their eyes. All potential survey questions must then be pre-tested and combined to form a



comprehensive survey that is capable of capturing the feelings of minorities as a whole.

- Gender-specific research regarding the barriers that exist with regard to being a female and a minority in the military. During the interview process for this project, it became clear that the Black female Marine officers felt that the majority of their diversity-related issues were due to their gender and not to their race/ethnicity. When specifically asked which characteristic seemed to be the root of their diversity-related problems, all female interviewees responded "gender." Studies should be conducted that look at the intersection of gender and race issues.

# APPENEDIX A. MODEL OF CAREER DEVELOPMENT FOR NAVY/MARINE OFFICERS





## **APPENDIX B. INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

1. What are the earliest memories you have about being interested in a military career? Childhood-adolescent years? Mother, father, relatives in the military? What do you remember about their influence? High school years? Role models, recruiters, advertisements, friends relatives. Discuss influential figures or recruiters. Any minorities?
2. Tell me about the day or moment when you actually decided to join the Marine Corps. The when, where and how? Who did you first discuss it with?
3. Tell me about your experiences at your commissioning source. Tell me about your experiences as a Black Marine officer.
4. What was your most rewarding experience as a Marine officer? Who was involved? When did it happen? Where did it happen? What made it so rewarding?
5. Do you plan to someday retire from the Marine Corps? What factors make you so inclined? Has downsizing changed your views in any way regarding your future in the Marine Corps? If so, how?
6. What has been your least rewarding experience as a Marine officer? Who was involved? When did it happen? Where did it happen? What made it so unrewarding?
7. Currently the Department of the Navy is attempting to increase minority accessions to 12 percent Black, 12 percent Hispanic, and 5 percent Other. What advice or recommendations might you have for senior military leadership to achieve these goals?
8. Would you recommend a career in the Marine Corps to other minorities? What do you think has worked well in the Marine Corps approach to minority recruitment? Do you feel that being a minority helps, hurts, or has no particular effect on one's career as a Marine officer?
9. Do you think that you are treated fairly in decisions concerning your career, that is, with respect to your non-minority counterparts? Have you benefited or been hurt by your minority status? Please cite examples.
10. How does accepting a career path that leads you to placement into a critical billet, such as acquisition, recruiting, etc., impact minority officers? How does it impact your career?

11. Is there anything else you would like to discuss regarding your decision to join the Marine Corps, the recruitment of minority officers, your views of the Marine Corps or Marine careers?

### APPENDIX C. MARINE MOS BREAKOUT

MOS	NUMBER
3002	4
0402	4
2502	1
3502	1
4402	1
0302	1
0180	1
0206	1
4002	1
TOTAL	15



# APPENDX D. DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS	NUMBER
<b>GENDER</b>	
Male	11
Female	4
<b>RANK</b>	
Col	2
LtCol	2
Maj	3
Capt	6
1stLt	1
2ndLt	1
<b>COMMISSIONING SOURCE</b>	
USNA	2
NROTC	1
OCS	4
PLC	3
OCC	2
WOCC	1
ECP	1
WO	1
<b>SERVICE ENTRY REGION</b>	
North	4
South	5
East	2
West	4





## APPENDIX E. DATA TEMPLATE

### PART A: DEMOGRAPHICS

RESPONDENT #:

RANK:

# BROTHERS: # SISTERS:

BIRTH ORDER:

MARITAL STATUS AT ENTRY:

NUMBER OF CHILDREN AT ENTRY:

MARITAL STATUS -- PRESENT:

NUMBER OF CHILDREN -- PRESENT:

AREA OF COUNTRY ENTERED:

EDUCATION:

SOURCE OF COMMISSION:

DATE OF COMMISSION:

LOS:

ENLISTED SERVICE:

### PART B: RESPONSES

REASON FOR ENTRY:

EDUCATION OF PARENTS:

EDUCATION OF PARENTS: FATHER: MOTHER:

PARENT'S OCCUPATIONS: FATHER: MOTHER:

PARENT'S MILITARY BACKGROUND: FATHER: MOTHER:

RELATIVES MILITARY BACKGROUND:

EARLIEST DESIRE TO ENTER:

ROLE MODELS:

RECRUITERS:

EXPERIENCES AT COMMISSIONING SOURCE:

EXPERIENCES AS BLACK OFFICER (1ST COMMAND):

LEAST REWARDING EXPERIENCE:

MOST REWARDING EXPERIENCE:

DOWNSIZING:

RETIREMENT:

12-12-5 % RECOMMENDATIONS:

RECRUITMENT:

RETENTION:

RACE (HELP/HARM):

RACE AND CAREER CHOICES:

FREEDOM TO COMMENT PORTION:



## **APPENDIX F. NAVY THEMES DEVELOPED BY JONES AND STIGLER**

- THEME I. MOST OFFICERS WERE FROM A TWO-PARENT HOUSEHOLD
- THEME II. SOME MILITARY BACKGROUND WAS PRESENT, GENERALLY ARMY
- THEME III. SELF-RECRUITMENT WAS PREVALENT
- THEME IV. ROLE MODELS WERE CREDITED WITH THE DECISION TO ENTER
- THEME V. MAJOR REASONS FOR JOINING THE NAVY WERE EDUCATION AND  
EMPLOYMENT
- THEME VI. EXPERIENCES TEND TO VARY BY COMMISSIONING SOURCE
- THEME VII. MANY MINORITIES BELIEVE THAT THEY HAVE TO DO MORE THAN  
WHITES TO GAIN THE SAME RECOGNITION
- THEME VIII. INTERVIEWEES TEND TO BELIEVE THEY HAVE BEEN SLIGHTED IN  
TERMS OF RESPECT OR REWARDS
- THEME IX. A VAST MAJORITY FEEL MOST REWARDED WHEN TRUSTED TO  
PERFORM AND WHEN HELPING SUBORDINATES
- THEME X. RACE (AND RACISM) IS A CONSISTENT, UNDERLYING FACTOR IN  
ALL THEMES
- THEME XI. MOST OFFICERS PLAN TO RETIRE
- THEME XII. DOWNSIZING CONCERNS TEND TO FOCUS ON BOTH  
ORGANIZATIONAL AND PERSONAL ELEMENTS
- THEME XIII. OFFICERS ARE SKEPTICAL ABOUT THE NAVY'S "12-12-5 PLAN"



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